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The Maroon.

A TALE OF VOODOO AND OBEAH.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

AUTHOR OF "THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN," "THE DEATH-SHOT," "THE SCALP HUNTERS," ETC., ETC.



THE INCANTATION.

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A Tale of Voodoo and Obeah.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

AUTHOR OF "THE RIFLE RANGERS," "THE SCALP HUNTERS," "THE WHITE CHIEF," "THE WAR TRAIL," "THE WILD HUNTRESS," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A JAMAICA SUGAR ESTATE.

A SUGAR estate, and one of the finest in the "land of springs," is that of "Mount Welcome." The "great house" or "buff" of the estate stands under the foot of the mountain, just at the point of union between two ridges—where a natural table or platform, elevated several feet above the level of the valley, had offered a tempting site to the builder.

In architectural style it is not very different from other houses of its kind, the well-known planter's dwelling of the West Indies. One story—the lower one, of course—is of strong stone mason-work, the second and only other being simply a wooden "frame" roofed with "shingles."

The side and end walls of this second story cannot with propriety be termed walls, since most part of them are occupied by a continuous line of Venetian shutters—the "jalousies" of Jamaica.

These impart a singular cage-like appearance to the house, at the same time contributing to its coolness—a quality of primary importance in a tropical climate.

In Mount Welcome House, as in all other country mansions of Jamaica, a stranger would remark a want of correspondence between the dwelling itself and the furniture which it contains. The former might be regarded as slight, and even flimsy. But it is this very character which renders it appropriate to the climate, and hence the absence of substantiality or costliness in the style and materials of the building.

The furniture, on the other hand—the solid tables of mahogany, and other ornamental woods—the shining carved side-boards—the profuse show of silver and cut glass that rests upon them—the elegant couches and chairs—the glittering lamps and candelabras—all combine to prove that the *quasi* meanness of the Jamaica planter's establishment extends no further than to the walls of his house. If the case be a cheap one, the jewels contained in it are of the costliest kind.

The mountain is a conspicuous feature of the landscape. Not so much from its height, for there are others of equal elevation near to it, and further off, though still within sight, many still higher. Even the famed "Blue Peak" is visible, towering hundreds of feet above the surrounding summits.

Nor is it conspicuous from being isolated. On the contrary, it is only a spur of that vast elevated chain of hills, that, separated by deep gorge-like valleys, and soaring thousands of feet above the level of the Caribbean Sea, are known as the "Blue Mountains of Jamaica."

Alone at its top is it treeless—bare and bald as the crown of a Franciscan friar. There stands the square coffer-like summit, a mass of solid rock, which repels the approach of the vegetable giants that crowd closely around its base, some of them stretching out their huge arms as if to strangle or embrace it.

One tree alone has succeeded in scaling its steep rampart-like wall. A noble palm—the *araca*—has accomplished this feat, and stands conspicuously upon the table-top, its plumed leaves waving haughtily aloft, like a triumphal banner planted upon the parapet of some conquered castle.

This summit rock presents a singular appearance. Its seamed and scarred surface is mottled with a dark glaze, which during the sunlight, and even under the mellow beams of the moon, gives forth a coruscation, as if the light were reflected from scale armor.

To the denizens of the valley below it is known as the *Jumbe Rock*—a name characteristic of the superstitious ideas attached to it. Though constantly before their eyes, and accessible by an hour's climbing up the forest path, there is not a negro on the estate of Mount Welcome, nor on any other for miles around, that would venture alone to visit the *Jumbe Rock*; and to most, if not all of them, the top of this mountain is as much of a *terra incognita* as the summit of Chimborazo!

I am speaking of a period more than half a century ago. At that time the terror that was attached to the *Jumbe Rock* did not altogether owe its origin to mere superstition. It had been partly inspired by the remembrance of a horrid history. The rock had been the scene of an execution, which for cruel and cold-blooded barbarity rather deserves to be called a crime.

That table summit, like the blood-stained

temples of the Montezumas, had been used as an altar, upon which a human sacrifice had been offered up.

The victim had been a Coromantee *myal-man* or wizard, of the name of Chakra—a slave of Mr. Loftus Vaughan, master of Mount Welcome. He had been accused of the practice of *obeah*, in Louisiana to-day better known as *voodoo* or negro witchcraft, and had been condemned to death by his master as a justice of the peace, sitting with two other justices in full bench. The mode of his execution was one of great cruelty. He was chained to the palm tree on the top of the *Jumbe Rock* and left there to starve to death. His skeleton remained chained to the tree as had been the body in life, and not a negro on the plantation dared ascend the *Jumbe Rock* after nightfall, for fear of seeing the "duppy," or ghost of Chakra, the *myal-man*.

On a tranquil morning in the fair month of May—fair in Jamaica, as elsewhere on the earth—a large bell ringing in the great hall of Mount Welcome announced the hour of breakfast.

As yet there were no guests around the table, nor in the hall—only the black and colored domestics, who, to the number of half a dozen, had just come up from the kitchen with trays and dishes containing the viands that were to compose the meal.

Soon after the tones of the bell had ceased to vibrate through the hall, they for whom the summons was intended made their appearance, entering from opposite sides, not together, but one coming in a little before the other.

The first was a gentleman of somewhat over middle age, of a hale complexion, and full, portly form.

He was dressed in a suit of nankeens—jacket and trousers, both of ample make—the former open in front, and displaying a shirt bosom of finest white linen, the broad plaits of which were uncovered by any vest. A wide turn-down collar was folded back, exhibiting a full development of throat, which, with the broad jaws of ruddy hue, appeared clean and freshly shaven.

Loftus Vaughan, Esq., proprietor of Mount Welcome, Justice of the Peace, and *Custos Rotulorum*, cast a scrutinizing glance at the display of viands, and apparently satisfied with what he saw, seated himself before the table, his face beaming with a smile of pleasant anticipation.

He had scarce taken his seat when a fair apparition appeared, entering from the further end of the hall—a young, virgin-like creature, looking as fresh and roseate as the first rays of the Aurora.

It would have required an experienced eye—one well acquainted with the physiological characteristics of race—to have told that that young girl was not of the purest Caucasian blood. And yet, the slight undulation of the hair; a rotund rather than an oval face; eyes of darkest amber, with a slight gleam perpetually in the pupils; a singular, picture-like expression in the coloring of the cheeks, were all characteristics that proclaimed the presence of the *sang-mele*.

Slight indeed was the *taint*; and it seems like profanation to employ the phrase, when speaking of a creature so beautifully fair, for beautifully fair was the daughter of Loftus Vaughan. She was his only daughter, the only member of his family—for the proprietor of Mount Welcome was a widower.

On entering the hall, the young girl did not proceed directly to seat herself; but, gliding behind the chair occupied by her father, she flung her arms around his neck, and imprinted a kiss upon his forehead.

After saluting her father, the young girl took her seat in front of the coffee urn, and commenced performing the duties of the table.

In this she was assisted by a girl apparently of her own age, but of widely different appearance. Her waiting-maid it was, who, having entered at the same time, had taken her station behind the chair of her mistress.

The girl was far from ill-looking; and, to an eye accustomed to her "style," she may have appeared even handsome. Her elegant shape, exposed by the extreme scantiness of her costume, a sleeveless robe, with a Madras kerchief worn *a la toque* upon her head; her graceful attitudes, which seemed natural to her, either when in motion or standing poised behind the chair of her mistress; the quick glance of her fine, fiery eyes, and the pearl-like whiteness of her teeth; all contributed to make up a picture that was far from commonplace.

This young girl was a slave—the slave Yola.

CHAPTER II.

TWO LETTERS.

INSTEAD of standing in the middle of the floor, the breakfast table had been placed close to the front window, in order that, with the jalousies thrown open, the fresh air might be more freely felt, while at the same time a view could be obtained of the landscape outside. A splendid view it was, comprising the valley with its long palm-shaded avenue, a reach of the Montego river, the roofs and spires of the town, the ship-

ping in the bay and roadstead, the bay itself, and the blue Caribbean beyond.

Striking as was this landscape, Mr. Vaughan just then showed no inclination to look upon it. He was too busily occupied with the rich viands upon the table; and when he at length found time to glance over the window-sill, his glance extended no further than to the negro "gang" at work among the canes, to see if his drivers were doing their duty.

The eyes of Miss Vaughan were oftener directed to the outside view. It was at this hour that one of the servants usually returned from Montego Bay, bringing the letters from the post-office. There was nothing in her manner that betrayed any particular anxiety about his arrival; but simply that lively interest which young ladies in all countries feel when expecting the postman, hoping for one of those little letters of twelve sheets with closely-written and crossed lines, most difficult to decipher, and yet to them more interesting than even the pages of the newest novel.

Very soon a dark object, of rudely Centaurean form appeared coming along the avenue; and, shortly after, an imp-like negro lad upon the back of a rough pony galloped up to the front entrance. This was Quashie, the post-boy of Mount Welcome.

If Miss Vaughan expected a billet, she was doomed to disappointment. There were only two letters in the bag, with a newspaper; and all three were for the *Custos* himself.

All bore the English post-mark; and the superscription of one of the letters was by him at once recognized, a pleasant smile stealing over his features as he broke open the seal.

A few moments sufficed to make him master of its contents, when the smile increased to a look of vivid gratification, and, rising from his chair, he paced for some time back and forward, snapping his fingers, and ejaculating, "Good—good! I thought so!"

His daughter regarded his behavior with surprise. Gravity was her father's habit, at times amounting to austerity. Such an exhibition of gaiety was rare with Loftus Vaughan.

"Some pleasing news, papa?"

"Yes, you little rogue, very."

"May I not hear it?"

"Yes—no—no—not yet awhile."

"Papa! It is cruel of you to keep it from me. I promise I shall share your joy."

"Ah! you will when you hear the news—that is, if you're not a little simpleton, Kate."

"I a simpleton, papa? I shall not be called so."

"Why, you'll be a simpleton if you don't be joyful—when you—never mind, child—I'll tell you all about it by-and-by. Good, good!" continued he, in a state of ecstatic frenzy. "I thought so, I knew he would come."

"Then you expect some one, papa?"

"I do. Guess who it is!"

"How could I? You know I am unacquainted with your English friends."

"Not with their names? You have heard their names, and seen letters from some of them?"

"Oh, yes, I often hear you speak of one—Mr. Smythje. A very odd name it is! I wouldn't be called Smythje for the world."

"Ta, ta, child! Smythje is a very pretty name, especially with Montagu before it. Montagu is magnificent. Besides, Mr. Smythje is the owner of Montagu Castle."

"Oh, papa! how can that make his name sound any better? Is it he whom you expect?"

"Yes, dear. He writes to say that he will come by the next ship—the *Sea Nymph* she is called. She was to sail a week after the letter was written, so that we may look out for his arrival in a few days. Gad! I must prepare for him. You know Montagu Castle is out of repair. He is to be my guest; and, hark you, Catherine!" continued the planter, once more seating himself at the table, and bending toward his daughter, so that his *sotto voce* might not be overheard by the domestics, "you must do your best to entertain this young stranger. He is said to be an accomplished gentleman, and I know he is a rich one. It is to my interest to be friendly to him," added Mr. Vaughan, in a still lower tone of voice, as if in soliloquy, but loud enough for his daughter to hear what was said.

"Dear papa!" was the reply, "how could I be otherwise than polite to him? If only for your sake—"

"If only for *your own*," said the father, interrupting her, and accompanying the remark with a sly look and laugh. "But, dear Catherine," continued he, "we shall find time to talk of this again. I must read the other letter. Who on earth can it be from? Egad! I never saw the writing before."

"Never saw the handwriting before," said he, in repetition, as he broke open the seal of the second epistle.

If the contents of the first had filled him with joy, those of the second produced an effect directly the opposite.

"Sdeath!" exclaimed he, crushing the letter, as he finished reading it, and once more nervously springing to his feet. "Dead or living, that ill-starred brother of mine seems as if created

to be a curse to me! While alive, always wanting money; and now that he is dead sending his son—a never-do-well, like himself—to trouble and perhaps disgrace me."

"Dear father," said the young girl, startled more by his wild demeanor than what he was saying—for the words were muttered in a low voice, and rather in soliloquy—"has the other letter brought unpleasant news?"

"Ah! that it has. You may read for yourself."

And once more seating himself, he tossed the unwelcome epistle across the table, and recommenced eating with apparent voracity—as if by that means to tranquilize his perturbed spirit.

Kate took up the rejected letter; and, smoothing out the paper, ran her eyes over the contents.

The perusal did not require much time; for considering that the letter had made such a long journey, its contents were of the shortest:

"LONDON, June 10, 18—

"DEAR UNCLE:—I have to announce to you the melancholy intelligence that your brother, my dear father, is no more. His last words were that I should go over to you; and acting in accordance with his wish, I have taken passage for Jamaica. The ship is the *Sea Nymph*, and is to sail upon the 18th instant. I do not know how long we shall be at sea, but I hope it will prove a short voyage, as poor father's effects were all taken by the sheriff's officer and I am compelled, for want of money, to take passage in the *steerage*, which I have been told is anything but a luxurious mode of traveling. But I am young and strong, and no doubt shall be able to endure it.

Yours affectionately,

"HERBERT VAUGHAN."

Whatever effect the reading of the letter may have had upon Kate Vaughan, it certainly did not produce indignation. On the contrary, an expression of sympathy stole over her face as she mastered the contents of the epistle; and on finishing it, the phrase, "poor fellow!" dropped as if involuntarily, and just audibly, from her lips.

CHAPTER III.

THE SLAVER.

A HOT West Indian sun was rapidly declining toward the Caribbean Sea, as if hastening to cool his fiery orb in the blue water, when a slaver, that had rounded Pedro Point, in the Island of Jamaica, was seen standing eastward for Montego Bay.

As she was running under one of the gentlest of breezes, all her canvas was spread; and the weather-worn appearance of her sails denoted that she was making land at the termination of a long ocean voyage. This was further manifest by the faded paint upon her sides, and the dark, dirt-colored blotches that marked the position of her hawse-holes and scuppers.

After getting fairly inside the bay, but still at a long distance from the town, she was observed suddenly to tack; and, instead of continuing on toward the harbor, head for a point on the southern side, where the shore was uninhabited and solitary.

On arriving within a mile of the land she took in sail, until every inch of canvas was furled upon her yards. Then the sharp rattling of the chain, as it dragged through the iron ring of the hawse-hole, announced the dropping of an anchor.

In a few moments after the ship swung round, and, drifting till the chain-cable became taut, lay motionless upon the water.

Almost on the same instant that the slave-barge had dropped anchor, a small boat shot out from the silent shore; which, as soon as it had got fairly clear of the land, could be seen to be steering in the direction of the newly-anchored vessel.

There were three men in the boat, two of whom were plying the oars. These were both black men; naked, with the exception of dirty white trowsers covering their limbs, and coarse palm-leaf hats upon their heads.

The third occupant of the skiff was a white, or more properly, a whitish man. He appeared to be about sixty years old and had once been white; but long exposure to a West Indian sun, combined with the numerous dirt-bedaubed creases and furrows in his skin, had darkened his complexion to the hue of leaf-tobacco.

His features, naturally of an angular shape, had become so narrowed and sharpened by age as to leave scarce anything in front, and to get a view of his face it was necessary to step to one side and scan it *en profil*.

Thus viewed, there was breadth enough and features of the most prominent character—including a nose like the claw of a lobster—a sharp, projecting chin—with a deep embayment between, marking the locality of the lips; the outlines of all suggesting a great resemblance to the profile of a parrot.

The natural blackness of his eyes was rendered deeper by contrast with long white eyebrows running more than half-way around them, and meeting over the narrow ridge of the nose. Hair upon the head there was none—that is, none that was visible; a skull-cap of whitish cotton stuff covering the whole crown and coming down over both ears. Over this was a white beaver hat, whose worn nap and broken edges told of long service.

A pair of large green goggles resting on the humped bridge of his nose protected his eyes from the sun, though they might perhaps have been worn for another purpose—to conceal the villainous expression of the orbs that sparkled beneath them.

A sky-blue cloth coat, whitened by long wear, with metal buttons, once bright, now changed to the hue of bronze; small-clothes of kersey-mere, glistening with grease; long stockings and tarnished top-boots made up the costume of this unique individual. A large blue cotton umbrella rested across his knees, as both hands were occupied in steering the skiff.

The portrait here given, or perhaps it should be styled profile, is that of Jacob Jessuron, the slave-merchant.

The two oarsmen were simply his slaves.

The little craft had put out from the shore from a secluded spot at a distance from the town, but still within view of it. It was evidently making for the newly-anchored bark, and evidently rowed at its best speed. Indeed, the steersman appeared to be urging his blacks to the exertion of their utmost strength. From time to time he was seen to twist his body half around and look toward the town, as though he expected or dreaded to see a rival boat coming from that quarter, and was desirous to reach the bark ahead of her.

If such was his design it proved successful. Although his little skiff was a considerable time in traversing the distance from shore to ship—a distance of a mile—he arrived at the point of his destination without any other boat making its appearance.

"Sheep ahoy!" shouted he, as the skiff was pulled up under the larboard quarter of the barge.

"Ay, ay!" responded a voice from above.

"Is that Captain Showler I hearsh?"

"Hilloo! who's there?" interrogated some one on the quarter-deck; and the moment after, the fallow face of Captain Aminadab Jowler presented himself at the gangway.

"Ah! Mister Jessuron, that you, eh? Determined to have fust peep at my blackeys? Well, fust kim fust served, that's my rule. Glad to see you, old fellow. How'd deo?"

"Fusht-rate! fusht-rate! I hopsh you're the same yourself, Captain Showler. How ish you for cargo?"

"Fine, old boy! Got a prime lot this time. All sizes, colors, and sexes too, ha! ha! You can pick and choose to suit yourself, I reckon. Come, climb aboard and squint your eye over 'em!"

The slave-merchant, thus invited, caught hold of the rope ladder let down for his accommodation, and scrambling up the ship's side with the agility of an old ape, stepped upon the deck of the slaver.

After some moments spent in hand-shaking and other forms of gratulation, proving that the trader and merchant were old friends, and as thick as two thieves could possibly be, the latter fixed the goggles more firmly on the ridge of his nose and commenced the inspection of the "cargo."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOOLAH PRINCE.

On the quarter-deck of the slaver, and near the "companion," stood a man of unique appearance, differing not only from the whites who composed the crew, but also from the blacks and browns who constituted the cargo.

His costume, attitude, and some other trivial circumstances, proclaimed him as belonging neither to one nor the other.

He had just stepped up from the cabin and was lingering upon the quarter-deck.

Having the *entree* of the first, and the privilege of remaining upon the second, he could not be one of the "bales" of this human merchandise, and yet both costume and complexion forbade the supposition that he was of the slaver's crew. Both denoted an African origin, though his features were not of a marked African type. Rather were they Asiatic, or more correctly, Arabian, but in some respects differing also from Arab features. In truth, they were almost European; but the complexion again negated the idea that the individual in question belonged to any of the nationalities of Europe. His hue was that of a light Florentine bronze, with a tinge of chestnut.

He appeared to be about eighteen or nineteen years of age, with a person well proportioned, and possessing the following characteristics: A fine arched eyebrow, spanning an eye full and rotund; a nose slightly aquiline; thin, well-modeled lips; white teeth—whiter from contrast with the dark shading on the upper lip—and over all an ample *chevelure* of jet-black hair, slightly curling, but not at all woolly.

In nothing did he differ more from the dark-skinned helots of the hold than in his costume. While none of these had any clothing upon their bodies, or next to none, he, on the contrary, was splendidly appareled—his face, throat, arms and limbs, from the knee to the ankle, being the only parts not covered by a garment.

A sort of sleeveless tunic of yellow satin,

with a skirt that just reached below his knees, was bound around his waist by a scarf of crimson China crape, the ends of which, hanging still lower, were adorned with a fringe-work of gold. Over the left shoulder rested loosely another scarf of blue burnous cloth, concealing the arm over which it hung; while, half hidden beneath its draping, could be perceived a cimeter in its richly-chased scabbard, with a hilt of carved ivory. A turban upon the head, and sandals of Kardofan leather upon the feet, completed his costume.

Notwithstanding the Asiatic character of the dress, and the resemblance of the wearer to those East Indians known as Lascars, he was a true African, though not of that type which we usually associate with the word, and which suggests a certain *negroism* of features. He was one of a people entirely distinct from the negro—the great nation of the Foolahs (Fellat-tas)—that race of shepherd warriors whose country extends from the confines of Darfur to the shores of the Atlantic—the lords of Sockatoo and Timbuctoo—those fanatic followers of the false prophet who conspired the death of Laing, and murdered Mungo Park upon the Quorra. Of such race was the individual who stood on the quarter-deck of the slaver.

He was not alone. Three or four others were around him, who also differed from the wretched creatures in the hold. But their dresses of more common material, as well as other circumstances, told that they were his inferiors in rank—in short, his attendants.

The humble mien with which they regarded him, and the watchful attention to his every look and gesture, proclaimed the habitual obedience to which they were accustomed; while the turbans which they wore, and their mode of salutation—the *salaam*—told of an obeisance Oriental and slavish.

To the richness of the young man's attire was added a certain haughtiness of mien that proclaimed him a person of rank, perhaps the chieftain of some African tribe.

And such, in reality, he was—a Foolah prince, from the banks of the Senegal.

There, neither his presence nor appearance would have attracted more than passing observation; but here, on the western side of the Atlantic, on board a slave-ship, both required explanation.

It was evident that he was not the same category with his unfortunate countrymen "between decks," doomed to perpetual captivity. There were no signs that he had been treated as a captive, but the contrary.

How, then, was his presence on board the slave barge to be accounted for? Was he a passenger? In what relationship did he stand to the people who surrounded him?

Such, though differently worded, were the interrogatories put by the slave-merchant, as returning from the fore-deck, after completing his inspection of the cargo, his eyes for the first time fell upon the young Fellatta.

"Blesh my shstars, Captain Showler!" cried he, holding up both hands, and looking with astonishment at the turbaned individuals on the quarter-deck. "Blesh my shstars!" he repeated; "what ish all this? S'h'elp my Gott! thesh fellows are not shlaves, are they?"

"No, Mister Jessuron, no. They ain't slaves, not all on 'em ain't. That ere fine fellow, in silk and satin, air a owner o' slaves hisself. He air a prince."

"What dosh you say, Captain Showler? a prinshe?"

"Ye ain't astonished at that, air ye. 'Tain't the fust time I've had an African prince for a passenger. This year's his Royal Highness the Prince Cingues, son o' the Grand Sultan of Foota-toro. The other fellows you see thar by him are his attendants—courtiers as waits on him. That with the yellow turban's 'gold stick,' him in blue's 'silver stick,' an' 't'other fellow's 'groom o' the chamber,' I s'pose."

"Sultan of Foota-toro!" exclaimed the slave-merchant, still holding up the blue umbrella in surprise. "King of the Cannibal Islandsh! Aha, a good shoke, Captain Showler! But, serious, mine friend, what for bash you tricked them out in this way? They won't fetch a joey more in the market for all thesh fine feathers."

"Seerus, Mister Jessuron, they're not for the market. I swar to ye the fellur's a real Afrikin prince."

"African fiddleshtick!" echoed the slave-merchant with an incredulous shrug. "Come, worthy captain, what'sh the mashquerade about?"

"Not a bit of that, ole fellur! 'Sure ye the nigger's a prince, and my passenger—nothing more or less."

"S'h'elp you Gott, ish it so?"

"So help me that!" emphatically replied the skipper. "It's just as I've told ye, Mister Jessuron."

"Blesh my soul!—a passenger, you shay?"

"Yes; and he paid his passage, too, like a prince, as he is."

"But what bish business here in Shamaica?"

"Ah! that's altogether a kewrious story, Mister Jessuron. You'll hardly guess his bizness, I reckon?"

"Lesh hear it, friend Showler."

"Well, then, the story air this:

"'Bout twelve months ago an army o' Mandingoes attacked the town of Old Foota-toro, and 'mong other plunder, carried off one o' his daughters—own sister to the young fellur you see there. They sold her to a West Indian trader; who, in course, brought the girl over here to some o' the islands, which ain't known. Old Foota-toro, like the rest o' 'em, thinks the slaves are all fetched to one place, and he's half beside himself 'bout the loss of this gurl—she war his favorite, and a sort of a court belle among 'em—he's sent the brother to search her out, and get her back from whoever hez purchased her on this side. That's the hul story for you."

The expression that had been gathering on the countenance of the Jew, while this relation was being made to him, indicated something more than a common interest in the tale—something beyond mere curiosity.

At the same time he seemed as if trying to conceal any outward sign of emotion, by preserving, as much as possible, the rigidity of his features.

"Blesh my soul!" he exclaimed, as the skipper had concluded. "Ash I live, a wonderful shtory? But how ish he ever to find hish sister? He might ash well look for a needle in a haystack."

"Wall, that's true enough," replied the slave skipper. "As for that," he added, with an air of stoical indifference, "'tain't no business o' mine. My affair hez been to carry the young fellur acrost the Atlantic, an' I'm willin' to take him back on the same terms, and at the same price, if he kin pay it."

"Did he pay you a goodsh price?" inquired the Jew, with evident interest in the answer.

"He paid like a prince, as I've told you. D'ye see that batch o' yellow Mandingoes by the windlass youndr?"

"Yesh, yesh!"

"Forty there air, all told."

"Well?"

"Twenty on 'em I'm to have fer fetchin' him acrost. Cheap enough, ain't it?"

"Dirt sheep, friend Showler. The other twenty?"

"They are his'n. He's brought 'em with him to swop for the sister—when he finds her."

"Ah, yesh! if he finds the girl."

"In coorse, if he finds her."

"Ach!" exclaimed the Jew, with a significant shrug of his shoulders, "that will not be an easy bishness, Captain Showler."

"By Christopher Columbus, old fellow!" said the trader, apparently struck with an idea; "now I think of it, you might gi'e him some help in the findin' o' her. I know no man more likely than yourself to be able to pilot him. You know everybody in the island, I reckon. No doubt he will pay you well for your trouble. I'm rayther anxious he should succeed. King Foota-toro is one of my best sources of supply; and if the gurl could be found and took back, I know the old nigger would do the handsome to me on my next trip to the coast."

"Well, worthy capt'in, I don't know that there's any hope, and won't hold out any to his royal highness the prince. I'm not as able to get about ash I ushed to was; but I'll try my besht for you. As you shay, I might do something towardsh putting him in the way. Well, we'll talk it over; but let ush first settle our other bishness, or all the world will be aboard. Twenty, you shay, are his?"

"Twenty of them 'ere Mandingoes?"

"Hash be anything besides?"

"In cash? No, not a red cent. Men and women are the dollars of his country. He hez the four attendants, you see. They air his slaves like the others."

"Twenty four, then, in all. Blesh my soul! What a lucky fellow ish this prinsh. Maybe I can do something for him; but we can talk it over in the cabin, and I'm ready for something to drink, worthy Showler."

Smacking his lips, and snapping his fingers as he talked, the old reprobate descended the companion stairway, the captain of the slaver following close behind him.

We know not, except by implication, the details of the bargaining that took place below. The negotiation was a secret one, as became the nature of any transaction between two such characters as a slave-dealer and a slave-stealer.

It resulted, however, in the purchase of the whole cargo; and in so short a time, that just as the sun sunk into the sea, the gig, cutter, and long-boat of the slaver were lowered into the water; and, under the darkness of night, the "bales" were transported to the shore, and landed in the little cove whence the skiff of the slave-merchant had put out.

Among them were the twenty Mandingoes, the attendants of the prince.

The skiff was seen returning to the shore, a cable's length in the wake of the other boats. Now, however, a fourth personage appeared in it, seated in the stern, face to face with the owner. The gayly-colored costume, even in the darkness, shining over the calm shadowy surface of the sea, rendered it easy to recognize this individual as the Foolah prince. The wolf and the lamb were sailing in the same boat.

CHAPTER V.

A HANDSOME OFFER.

On the day after the slave ship had landed her cargo, and at an early hour in the morning, Mr. Vaughan, looking from the front window of his house, perceived a solitary horseman approaching by the long avenue.

As the stranger drew nearer, the animal he bestrode appeared gradually to transform itself into a mule; and the rider was seen to be an old gentleman in a blue coat, with metal buttons, and ample outside pockets, under which were breeches and top-boots, both sullied by long wear. A damaged brown beaver hat upon his head, with the edge of a white cotton skull-cap showing beneath it, green goggles upon the nose, and a large blue umbrella, instead of a whip, grasped in his right hand, enabled Mr. Vaughan to identify one of his nearest neighbors; the pen-keeper, Jacob Jessuron, who, among other live stock, was also known as an extensive speculator in slaves.

"Well, Mishter Vochan," began the Jew, "I hash come over to see you on a shmall bishness, a very shmall bishness it is, shcarcelly worth troubling you about."

Here the speaker hesitated as if to put some proposition into shape.

"Some black stock for sale, eh? I think I've heard that a cargo came in yesterday. You got part, I suppose?"

"Yesh, yesh, I bought a shmall lot, a very shmall lot. I hadn't the monish to buy more. S'help me Gott! the shlaves ish getting so dear ash I can't afford to buy. Possibible, I may have a shmall lot to dispoose of in a day or two; but joost now, I haven't a shingle head ready for the market. Thish morning I want to buy, instead of sell."

"To buy? From me, do you mean?"

"Well, the truth ish, Mishter Vochan, I hash a cushtomer, who wants a likely wench for waiting at hish table. Theresh none among my shtock he thinks good enough for hish purpossh. I wash thinking you has got one, if you could spare her, that would suit him nishely."

"Which do you mean?"

"I mean that young Foolah wench ash I sold you lasht year, joosh after crop time."

"Oh! the girl Yola?"

"Yesh, I think that wosh her name. Ash you had her dirt sheep, I don't mind giving you shomething on your bargain—shay ten pounds currenshy?"

"Poh, poh, poh!" replied the planter with a deprecating shrug. "That would never do, even if meant to sell the girl. But I have no wish to part with her."

"Shay twenty, then?"

"Nor twice twenty, neighbor. I wouldn't under any circumstances take less than two hundred pounds for that girl. She has turned out a most valuable servant—"

"Two hunder poundsh!" interrupted the Jew, starting up in his chair. "Och! Mishter Vochan, theresh not a black wench in the island worth half the monish. Two hunder poundsh! Blesh my soul, that ish a prishe! I'd be glad to give any two I hash for two hunder poundsh."

"Why, Mr. Jessuron! I thought you said just now slaves were getting very dear?"

"Dear, yesh; but that is doublish dear. S'help me Gott! You don't mean it, Mishter Vochan?"

"But I do mean it; and even if you were to offer me two hundred—"

"Don't shay more about it," said the slave-merchant, hurriedly interrupting the hypothetical speech; "don't shay more; I agreeesh to give it. Two hunder poundsh! blesh my shtars! it'll make a bankrupt' of me."

"No, it will not do that; since I cannot agree to take it."

"Not take two hunder poundsh?"

"No—nor twice that sum."

"Gott help ush! Mishter Vochan; you ish shurely shokin! Why will you not take two hunder? I hash the monish in my pocket."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, neighbor; but the fact is, I could not sell the girl Yola at any price, without the consent of my daughter, to whom I have given her."

"Miss Vochan?"

"Yes, she is her maid; and I know that my daughter is very fond of her. It is not likely she would consent to the girl's being sold."

"But, Mishter Vochan! you shurely don't let your daughter shtand between you and a good bargain? Two hunder poundsh is big monish—big monish, Cushtos. The wench is not worth half ash much, and, for myshelf, I wouldn't give half; but I don't want to dishappoint a good cushtomer, who'sh not so particular ash to prishe."

"Well," replied the planter, after a moment's reflection, and apparently tempted by the handsome offer, "since you seem so determined upon buying the wench, I'll consult my daughter about it. But I can hold out very little hope of success. I know that she likes this young Foolah. I have heard that the girl was some king's daughter in her own country; and I am as good as certain Kate won't consent to her being sold."

"Not if you wished it, Mishter Vochan?"

"Oh, if I insisted upon it, of course; but I gave my daughter a promise not to part with

the girl against her wish, and I never break my word, Mr. Jessuron—not to my own child."

With this rather affected profession, the planter walked out of the room, leaving the slave-merchant to his reflections.

"May the deffell strike me dead if that man isn't mad!" soliloquized the Jew, when left to himself; "shtark shtarin mad! refuse two hunder poundsh for a she wench ash brown as a cocoanut! Bless my shtars?"

"As I told you, Mr. Jessuron," said the planter, re-entering the hall, "my daughter is inexorable. Yola cannot be sold."

"Good-morning, Mishter Vochan," said the slave-merchant, taking up his hat and umbrella, and making for the door, "Good morning, shir: I hash no other bishness to-day."

Then, putting on his hat and grasping his umbrella with an air of spitefulness he was unable to conceal, he hurried down the stone steps, scrambled upon the back of his mule, and rode away in sullen silence.

"Unusually free with his money this morning," said the planter, looking after him. "Some shabby scheme, I have no doubt. Well, I suppose I have thwarted it; besides, I am glad of an opportunity of disobliging the old curmudgeon; many's the time he has done as much for me!"

CHAPTER VI.

JUDITH JESSURON.

IN the most unamiable of tempers did the slave-speculator ride back down the avenue. So out of sorts was he at the result of his interview, that he did not think of unfolding his blue umbrella to protect himself from the hot rays of the sun, now striking vertically downward. On the contrary, he used the *paraphuie* for a very different purpose, every now and then belaboring the ribs of his mule with it, as if to rid himself of his spleen by venting it on the innocent mongrel.

"The dusht off my shoosh to both of yoush!" he said, as he cleared the gate entrance. "Ish off your grounds now; and, if I hash you here, I shay you something of my mind, something ash make you sell your wench for lesh ash two hunder poundsh! I do so some time, pleash Gott! Ach!"

Uttering this last exclamation with a prolonged aspirate, he raised himself erect in his stirrups; and, half-turning his mule, shook his umbrella in a threatening manner toward Mount Welcome, his eye accompanying the action with a glance that expressed some secret but vindictive determination.

As he faced back into the road, another personage appeared upon the scene—a female equestrian, who, trotting briskly up, turned her horse, and rode along by his side.

She was a young girl, or rather a young woman—a bright, beautiful creature—who appeared an angel by the side of that demon-like old man.

A singular contrast did they present as they rode together, this fair maid and that harsh-featured, ugly old man, unlike as the rose to its parent thorn.

Sad are we to say that the contrast was only physical; morally, it was "like father like daughter." In external form, Judith Jessuron was an angel; in spirit—and we say it with regret—she was the child of her father—devilish as he.

"A failure?" said this fair she, taking the initiative. "Pah! I needn't have asked you: it's clear enough from your looks; though, certes, that beautiful countenance of yours is not a very legible index to your thoughts. What says Vanity Vaughan? Will he sell the girl?"

"No."

"As I expected."

"S'help me, he won't!"

"How much did you bid for her?"

"Och! I'sh ashamed to tell you, Shoodith."

"Come, old rabbi, you needn't be backward before me. How much?"

"Two hunder poundsh."

"But tell me: why would the Custos not sell? He likes money almost as well as yourself. Two hundred pounds is a large price for this copper-colored wench—quite double what she's worth."

"Ach! Shoodith, dear, it wash not Vochan hishelf that refused it."

"Who then?"

"Hish daughter."

"Shel!" exclaimed the young Jewess, with a curl of the lip and a contemptuous twist of her beautiful nostril. "She, you say? I wonder what next! The conceited *mustee*, herself no better than a slave!"

"Shtop, shtop, Shoodith," interrupted the Jew, with a look of uneasiness. "Keep that to yourself, my shild. Shay no more about it—at leasht, not now, not now. The trees may have earsh."

The burst of angry passion hindered the fair "Shoodith" from making rejoinder, and for some moments father and daughter rode on in silence.

The latter was the first to recommence the conversation.

"You are foolish, good father," she said: "absurdly foolish."

"Why, Shoodith?"

"Why? In offering to buy this girl at all."

"Ay, what would you shay?" inquired the old Jew, as if the interrogatory had been an echo to his own thoughts. "What would you shay?"

"I would say that you are silly, old rabbi Jacob; and that's what I do say."

"Blesh my shoul! What dosh you mean, Shoodith?"

"Why, dear and worthy papa, you're not always so dull of comprehension. Answer me: what do you want the Foolah for?"

"Och! you know what I wants her for. Thish prinshe will give hish twenty Mandingoes for her. There ish no doubt but that she's his sister. Twenty good shtrong Mandingoes, worth twenty bunder poundsh. Blesh my soul! it'sh a fortune!"

"Ay, and you've gone about it in such a foolish fashion that you run a great risk of losing it."

"And how would you have me go about it, mine Shoodith?"

"By taking it!"

The slave-merchant suddenly jerked upon the bridle, and pulled his mule to a stand; as he did so darting toward his daughter a look half-puzzled, half-penetrating.

"Good father Jacob," continued she, halting at the same time, "you are not wont to be so dull-witted."

"Speak out, Shoodith. I don't understand you."

"You will presently. Didn't you say, just now, that Captain Jowler has reasons for not coming ashore?"

"Showler daren't show his face in the Bay—that'sh why he landed his cargo on the coast. Besides, there wash an understanding between him and me. He doesn't care what ish done with the prinshe—not he. Anyhow, he'll be gone away in twenty-four hours."

"Then in twenty-four hours the Mandingoes may be yours—prince, attendants, and all. But time is precious, papa. We had better hasten home at once, and strip his royal highness of those fine feathers before some of our curious neighbors come in and see them. People will talk scandal, you know. As for our worthy overseer—"

"Ab, Ravener! he knowsh all about it. I was obliged to tell him ash he landed."

"Of course you were; and it will cost you a Mandingo or two to keep his tongue tied, that it will. For the rest, there need be no difficulty. It won't matter what these savages may say for themselves. Fortunately, there's no scandal in a black man's tongue."

"Wonderful Shoodith!" exclaimed the admiring parent. "My precious daughter, you are worth your weight in golden guinsh! Twenty-four shlaves for nothing, and one of them a born prinshe! Two thousand currenshy! Blesh my soul! It ish a splendid profit—worth a whole year's buyin' and skellin'."

And with this honest reflection, the slave-merchant hammered his mule into a trot, and followed his "precious Shoodith," who had already given the whip to her horse, and was riding rapidly homeward.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SEA NYMPH.

ON the third day after the slaver had cast anchor in the Bay of Montego, a large, square-rigged vessel made her appearance in the offing; and, heading shoreward, with all sail set, stood boldly in for the harbor. The lettering upon her stern told that she was the "Sea Nymph, of Liverpool."

Though freighted with a cargo of merchandise, and in reality a merchantman, the presence on board of several individuals in the costume of landmen, denoted that the Sea Nymph also accommodated passengers.

Among these was one of peculiarities sufficiently distinctive to attract attention. A single glance at this personage satisfied you that you looked upon a London cockney, at the same time a West-end exquisite of the very purest water.

The features of this individual were regular enough, though without any striking character; and of a cast rather effeminate than vulgar. Their prevailing expression was that of a certain superciliousness, at times expending to an affectation of sardonism.

Notwithstanding a certain ill-disguised contempt with which he was regarded by some of his fellow-voyagers, not a few treated him with marked deference; and the obeisance paid him by the steward and cabin-boys of the Sea Nymph gave evidence of his capability to bestow a liberal largess. And such capability did he possess: for Mr. Montagu Smythje, the individual in question, was a youth of good family and fortune, the latter consisting of a magnificent sugar estate in Jamaica, left him by a deceased relative, to visit which was the object of his voyage.

Mr. Smythje had not come over the water with any intention of settling upon his Jamaica estate.

"Such an ideaw," to use his own phraseology, "newwaw entawed n.a. bwain. To ex-

change London and its pwesyaws for a wesi-dence among those haw-ed giggaws—deaw, no! I could newwaw think of such a voluntawny banishment; that would be a baw, a decided baw! A meaw twip to see something of the twopics, of which I've heard such extwaor'nary stowies, have a look at my sugaw plantation and the dem'd niggaws; besides, I have a stwong desire to take a squint at these Quesole queet-yaws, who are said to be dooc-ed pwetty. Haw! haw!"

After such fashion did Mr. Montagu Smythje explain the purpose of his voyage to such of his fellow-passengers as chanced to take an interest in it.

There were but few travelers in the steerage of the Sea Nymph. They who are compelled to adopt that irksome mode of voyaging across the Atlantic have but little errand to the West Indies, or elsewhere to tropical lands, where labor is monopolized by the thews and sinews of the slave. Only three or four of this class had found accommodation on board the Sea Nymph; and yet among these humble voyagers was one destined to play a conspicuous part in our story.

The individual in question was a young man, in appearance of the same age as Mr. Montagu Smythje, though differing from the latter in almost everything else. In stature he was what is termed "middle height," with limbs well set and rounded, denoting activity and strength. His complexion, though not what is termed brunette, was dark for a native of Britain, though such was he.

The garments he wore were his best, put on for the first time during the voyage, and for the grand occasion of landing. A dark blue tunic frock, faced with black braid, skirting down over a pair of close-fitting tights, and Hessian boots, gave him rather a *distingue* air, notwithstanding a little threadbarishness apparent along the seams.

The occupation in which the young man was engaged betrayed a certain degree of refinement. Standing near the windlass, in the blank leaf of a book, which appeared to be his journal, he was sketching the harbor into which the ship was about to enter; and the drawing exhibited no inconsiderable degree of artistic skill.

As the ship drew near to the shore, he closed the book, and stood scanning the gorgeous picture of tropical scenery, now, for the first time, disclosed to his eyes.

Despite the pleasant emotions which so fair a scene was calculated to call forth, his countenance betrayed anxiety, perhaps a doubt as to whether a welcome awaited him in that lovely land upon which he was looking.

Only a few moments had he been thus occupied, when a strange voice falling upon his ear caused him to turn toward the speaker, in whom he recognized the distinguished cabin passenger, Mr. Montagu Smythje.

As this gentlemen had voyaged all the way from Liverpool to Jamaica without once venturing to set his foot across the line which separates the sacred precincts of the quarter from the more plebeian forward deck, his presence by the windlass might have been matter of surprise.

A circumstance, however, explained it. It was the last hour of the voyage. The Sea Nymph was just heading into the harbor; and the passengers of all degrees had rushed forward, in order to obtain a better view of the glorious landscape unfolding itself before their eyes. Notwithstanding his often-expressed antipathy to the "abom'nable smell of law," it was but natural that Mr. Smythje should yield to the general curiosity, and go forward among the rest.

Having gained an elevated standpoint upon the top of the windlass he had adjusted the glass to his eye, and commenced ogling the landscape, now near enough for its details to be distinguished.

Not for long, however, did Mr. Smythje remain silent. He was not one of a saturnine habit. The fair scene was inspiring him with a poetical fervor, which soon found expression in characteristic speech.

"Doo-ed pwetty, 'pon honaw!" he exclaimed; "would make a spwendid dwop-scene faw a theataw! Dawn't yaw think so, ma good fwend?"

The person thus appealed to chanced to be the young steerage passenger, who, during the long voyage, had abstained from going abaft of the mainmast with as much scrupulousness as Mr. Smythje had observed about venturing forward. Hence it was that the voice of the exquisite was as strange to him as if he had never set eyes on that illustrious personage.

On perceiving that the speech was meant for himself, he was at first a little nettled at its patronizing tone; but the feeling of irritation soon passed away, and he fixed his eyes upon the speaker, with a good-humored, though somewhat contemptuous expression.

"Aw—haw—it is yaw, my young fellow," continued the exquisite, now for the first time perceiving to whom he had made his appeal. "Aw, indeed! I've often observed yaw from the quarter-deck. Ba Jawvel yes; a vewy

strange individwall! incompwehensibly stwange! May I ask—pawdon the liberty—what is bwing-ing yaw out heaw—to Jamaica, I mean?"

"That," replied the steerage passenger, again somewhat nettled at the rather free style of interrogation, "which is bringing yourself, the good ship Sea Nymph."

"Aw, haw! indeed! Good, veway good! But, my deaw sir, that is not what I meant."

"No?"

"No, I ashaw yaw. I meant what b'isness bwings yaw heaw. P'waps you have some pwofession?"

"No, not any," replied the young man, checking his inclination to retaliate the impertinent style of his interrogator.

"A twade, then?"

"I am sorry to say I have not even a trade."

"No pwofession! no twade! what the dooce daw yaw intend dawing in Jamaica? P'waps yaw expect the situation of book-keepaw on a pwantation, or niggaw-dwivaw. Neithaw, I believe, requiaws much expewience, as I am told the book-keepaw has pwositively no books to keep—haw! haw! and shawly any fellow, howevaw ignowant, may dwive a niggaw. Is that yaw expectation, my worthy fwend?"

"I have no expectation, one way or another," replied the young man, in a tone of careless indifference. "As to the business I may follow out here in Jamaica, that, I suppose, will depend on the will of another."

"Anothaw! aw!—who, pway?"

"My uncle."

"Aw, indeed! yaw have an uncle in Jamaica, then?"

"I have, if he be still alive."

"Aw, haw! yaw are not shaw of that intewesting fact! P'waps yaw've not heard from him wately?"

"Not for years," replied the young steerage passenger, his poor prospects now having caused him to relinquish the satirical tone which he had assumed. "Not for years," repeated he, "though I've written to him to say that I should come by this ship."

"Veway stwange! And pway, may I ask what b'isness yaw uncle follows?"

"He is a planter, I believe."

"A sugaw plantaw?"

"Yes; he was so when we last heard from him."

"Aw, then, p'waps he is wick—a pwopwietor! In that case he may find something faw yaw to daw, bettaw than niggaw-dwiving. Make yaw his ovaw-seeaw. May I know yaw name?"

"Quite welcome to it. Vaughan is my name."

"Vawn!" repeated the exquisite, in a tone that betrayed some newly-awakened interest;

"Vawn did I understand yaw to say?"

"Herbert Vaughan," replied the young man, with firmer emphasis.

"And yaw uncle's name?"

"He is also called Vaughan. He is my father's brother—or rather was—my father is dead."

"Not Woftus Vawn, Esq., of Mount Welcome?"

"Yes, Loftus Vaughan; my uncle is so called, and Mount Welcome is, I believe, the name of his estate."

"Veway stwange! incompwehensibly stwange—d'yaw know, my young fellow, that yaw and I appeaw to be making faw the same pawt. Woftus Vawn, of Mount Welcome, is the twustee of my own pwoperty, the vewy person to whom I am consigned. Deaw me! how dooc-ed stwange if yaw and I should yet be guests undaw the same woof!"

The remark was accompanied by a supercilious glance, that did not escape the observation of the young steerage passenger. It was this glance that gave the true signification to the words, which Herbert Vaughan interpreted as an insult.

He was on the point of making an angry rejoinder, when the exquisite turned abruptly away, as he parted drawing out some words of leave-taking, with the presumptive conjecture that they might meet again.

In less than half an hour after the brief conversation between Mr. Montagu Smythje and the young steerage passenger, the Sea Nymph had got warped into port, and was lying alongside the wharf.

A gangway plank was stretched from the shore; and over this, men and women, of all shades of color, from blonde to ebony black, and of as many different callings, came crowding aboard; while the passengers, sick of the ship and everything belonging to her, hastened to get on shore.

Among the different carriages ranged along the wharf, a handsome barouche appeared conspicuous. It was attached to a pair of cream-colored horses, splendidly caparisoned. A mulatto coachman sat upon the box, shining in a livery of lightest green, with yellow facings; while a footman, in garments of like hue, attended at the carriage-step, holding the door for some one to get in.

Herbert Vaughan, standing on the fore-deck of the Sea Nymph, as yet undecided as to whether he should then go ashore, had noticed this magnificent equipage. He was still gazing upon it, when his attention was attracted to

two gentlemen, who, having walked directly from the vessel, had just arrived by the side of the carriage. A white servant followed them, and behind were two negro attendants, carrying a number of parcels of light luggage. One of the gentlemen and the white servant were easily recognized by Herbert; they were Mr. Montagu Smythje and his valet.

Herbert now recalled the odd expression made use of, but the moment before, by his fellow-passenger—that he was “consigned” to the proprietor of Mount Welcome.

The carriage having received Mr. Montagu Smythje, and the footman having mounted the box—leaving the rumble to the English valet—was driven off at full speed; the second gentleman, who appeared to be an overseer, following on horseback as an escort.

Herbert watched the receding vehicle, until a turn in the road hid it from his view; and then dropping his eyes toward the deck, he stood for some moments in a reflective attitude, revolving in his mind some thoughts that were far from agreeable.

No one there to meet him and bid him welcome!

The countenance of the young adventurer became cloudy under the influence of this thought; and he stood silently gazing upon the deck with eyes that saw not.

“Sa!” said a negro boy, at this moment stepping up and interrupting his reflections.

“Ha!” rejoined Herbert, looking up and perceiving, with some surprise, that the darky was regarding him with a fixed stare. “What might you want, my lad? If it be money, I have none to give you.”

“Money, sa! wharra fo’ Quashie want money! He do wha’ mass’r bid. Young buckra ready go now?”

“Ready to go! where? What mean you, boy?”

“Go fo’ da great house.”

“Great house! of what great house are you speaking?”

“Moun’ Welc’m, sa—Mass’r Va’n. You fo’ Mass’r Va’n, sa?”

“What!” exclaimed Herbert, in surprise, at the same time scanning the darky from head to foot; “how do you know that, my boy?”

“Quashie know dat well ‘nuf. Cappen ob da big ship, obaseeah say so. Obaseeah point out young buckra from de waff; he send Quashie fetch young buckra to Moun’ Welc’m. Ready to go now, sa?”

“You are from Mount Welcome, then?”

“Ya, sa—me boss-boy da, an’ pose-boy; fetch pony for young Englis’ buckra. Obaseeah he bring b’rouche for grand Englis’ buckra. Baggage dey go in de ox-wagon.”

“Where is your pony?”

“Up yonna, sa; on de waff, sa. Ready go, sa?”

“All right,” said Herbert, now comprehending the situation of affairs. “Shoulder that portmanteau, and toss it into the wagon. Which road am I to take?”

“Can’t miss um road, sa; straight up da ribber till you come to de crossin’. Dar you take de road dat don’t lead to da left, you soon see Moun’ Welc’m, sa.”

“How far is it?”

“‘Bout sebben or eight mile, sa; reach dar long fore sundown; pony go like de berry lightnin’. Sure you no keep to da left by da crossin’.”

Thus instructed, the young steerage-passenger took his departure from the ship, after bidding adieu to the friendly tars who had treated him so handsomely during his irksome voyage.

With his gun, a fowling-piece, on his shoulder, he strode over the platform, and up the wooden wharf. Then detaching the pony from the wheel of the ox-wagon, to which it had been tied, he threw himself into the saddle, and trotted off along the road pointed out as the one that would conduct him to Mount Welcome.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LITTLE CLOUD.

THE carriage conveying Mr. Montagu Smythje from Montego Bay to Mount Welcome passed up the avenue and arrived at the great house just one hour before Herbert Vaughan made his appearance at the entrance gate of the plantation.

Mr. Smythje had arrived at half-past three, P. M. Four was the regular dining hour at Mount Welcome; so that there was just neat time for the valet to unpack the ample valises and portmanteaus, and dress his master for the table.

Though the Londoner had been all his life accustomed to dining well, he could not help indulging in some surprise at the plentiful and luxurious repast that was placed before him.

Perhaps in no part of the world does the table groan under a greater load of rich viands than in the West Indian Islands. In the prosperous times of sugar-planting, a Jamaican dinner was deserving the name of feast. Turtle was the common soup; and the most sumptuous dishes were arranged thickly over the board. Even the ordinary everyday dessert was a spread

worthy of Apicius; and the wines—instead of those dull twin poisons, port and sherry—were south-side Madeira, champagne, claret, and sparkling hock—all quaffed in copious flagons, plentiful as small beer.

A dinner of this good old-fashioned style had Loftus Vaughan prepared for his English guest. Behind the chairs appeared troops of colored attendants, gliding silently over the smooth floor. A constant stream of domestics pour d in and out of the hall, fetching and removing the dishes and plates, or carrying the wine decanters in silver coolers. Young girls of various shades of complexion—some nearly white—stood at intervals around the table, fanning the guests with long peacock plumes, and filling the great hall with an artificial current of delicious coolness.

The cloth having been removed from the highly-polished table, the sparkling decanters were once more passed round. In honor of his guest, the planter had already made free with his own wines, all of which were of most excellent quality.

Loftus Vaughan was at that moment at a maximum of enjoyment.

Just at that very moment, however, a cloud was making its appearance on the edge of the sky.

It was a very little cloud, and still very far off; but, for all that, a careful observer could have seen that its shadow became reflected on the brow of the planter.

Literally speaking, this cloud was an object on the earth, of shape half-human, half-equine, that appeared near the extreme end of the long avenue, moving toward the house.

When first seen by Loftus Vaughan it was still distant, though not so far off but that, with the raked eye, he could distinguish a man on horseback.

From that moment he might have been observed to turn about in his chair, at short intervals casting uneasy glances upon the centaurean form than was gradually growing bigger as it advanced.

For a time the expression on the face of Mr. Vaughan was far from being a marked one. The looks that conveyed it were furtive, and might have passed unnoticed by the superficial observer.

They had, in fact, escaped the notice both of his daughter and his guest; and it was not until after the horseman had made halt at the entrance of the by-path, and was seen coming on for the house, that the attention of either was drawn to the singular behavior of Mr. Vaughan.

Then, however, his nervous anxiety had become so undisguisedly patent as to elicit from Miss Vaughan an ejaculation of alarm; while the cockney involuntarily exclaimed:

“Bless ma soul!” adding the interrogatory—“Anything wrong, sir?”

“Oh, nothing!” stammered the planter; “only—only—a little surprise—that’s all.”

“Surprise, papal! what has caused it? Oh, see! yonder is some one on horseback—a man—a young man. I declare, it is our own pony he is riding; and that is Quashie running behind him! How very amusing! Papa, what is it all about?”

“Tut! sit down, child!” commanded the father, in a tone of nervous perplexity. “Sit down, I say! Whoever it be, it will be time enough to know when he arrives. Kate! Kate! ‘tis not well-bred of you to interrupt our dessert. Mr. Smythje, glass of Madeira with you, sir?”

“Plesyaw!” answered the exquisite, turning once more to the table, and occupying himself with the decanter.

Kate obeyed the command with a look that expressed both reluctance and surprise. She was slightly awed, too; not so much by the words, as the severe glance that accompanied them.

She made no reply, but sat gazing with a mystified air in the face of her father, who, hob-nobbing with his guest, affected not to notice her.

The pony and his rider were no longer visible, as they were now too close to the house to be seen over the sill of the window; but the clattering hoofs could be heard, the sounds coming nearer and nearer.

Mr. Vaughan was endeavoring to appear collected, and to say something, but his *sang froid* was assumed and unnatural; and being unable to keep up the conversation, an ominous silence succeeded.

The sound of the hoofs ceased to be heard. The pony, having arrived under the windows, had been brought to a halt.

Then there were voices, earnest and rather loud. They were succeeded by the noise of footsteps on the stone stairway. Some one was coming up the steps.

Mr. Vaughan looked aghast. All his fine plans were about to be frustrated. There was a hitch in the programme—Quashie had failed in the performance of his part.

“Aha!” ejaculated the planter, with returning delight, as the smooth, trim countenance of his overseer made its appearance above the landing. “Mr. Trusty wishes to speak with

me. Your pardon, Mr. Smythje—only for one moment.”

Mr. Vaughan rose from his seat and hastened, as if wishing to meet the overseer before the latter could enter the room.

Trusty, however, had already stepped inside the doorway; and, not being much of a diplomatist, had bluntly declared his errand—in *sotto voce*, it is true, but still not low enough to hinder a part of his communication from being heard. Among other words the phrase “your nephew” reached the ears of Kate, at that moment keenly bent to catch every sound.

The reply was also partially heard, though delivered in a low and apparently tremulous voice:

“Show him—summer-house—garden—tell him to wait—there presently.”

Mr. Vaughan turned back to the table with a half-satisfied air. He was fancying that he had escaped from his dilemma, at least for the time; but the expression which he perceived on the countenance of his daughter restored his suspicions that all was not right.

Scarce a second was he left in doubt, for almost on the instant Kate cried out in a tone of pleased surprise:

“Oh, papa, what do I hear! Did not Mr. Trusty say something about ‘your nephew’? After all, has cousin come? Is it he who—?”

“Kate, my child,” quickly interrupted her father, and appearing not to have understood her interrogatory, “you may retire to your room. Mr. Smythje and I would like to have our cigar, and the smoke of tobacco don’t agree with you. Go, child, go!”

The young girl instantly rose from her chair, and hastened to obey the command, notwithstanding the protestations of Mr. Smythje, who looked as if he would have much preferred her company to the cigar.

But her father hurriedly repeated the “Go, child, go!” accompanying the words with another of those severe glances which had already awed and mystified her.

Before she had passed fairly out of the great hall, however, her thoughts reverted to the unanswered interrogatory; and as she crossed the threshold of her chamber she was heard muttering to herself:

“I wonder if cousin be come.”

CHAPTER IX.

A BOLD RESOLVE.

FAR better would it have been for Mr. Vaughan, at least for the success of his schemes, had he adopted an honorable course with his nephew, and at once introduced him openly and aboveboard to his table, his daughter, and his aristocratic guest.

By his shabby treatment of his nephew, he was investing that young man with a romantic interest in the eyes of his daughter, that perhaps might never have been felt, or, at all events, not so readily. Misfortune, especially that which springs from persecution, is a grand suggester of sympathy—that is, when the appeal is made to noble hearts; and the heart of Kate Vaughan was of this quality.

In the brief undertone that had passed between her father and the overseer she had heard the command, “Show him to the summer-house.” She knew that the summer-house was within view of her chamber window. She was curious to see what in all her life she had never beheld—a cousin. Her curiosity was not balked. On looking through the lattice her cousin was before her eyes.

With his braided frock buttoned tightly over his breast, glittering Hessian boots on his well-turned limbs, his neat three cornered hat set lightly over his brown curls, he was not a sight to terrify a young girl, least of all a cousin. Even the bold, somewhat fierce expression upon his countenance, at that moment reflecting the angry emotions that were stirring within him, did not, in the eyes of the young creole, detract from the beauty of the face she saw before her.

For some moments she remained in the same attitude, gazing steadfastly and silent. Then, without turning, there escaped from her lips, low murmured, and as if by an involuntary effort, the interrogatory:

“Yola, is he not beautiful?”

“Beautiful, missa,” repeated the maid, who had not yet beheld the object for whom this admiration was meant; “who beautiful?”

“Who! My cousin, Yola.”

“What am cousin, missa?”

“Why, cousin is—is—something like a brother—only not exactly; that is, it’s not quite the same thing.”

“Brudder! Oh, missa, if he Yola brudder she him speak, she care not who be angry.”

“True, Yola; and if he were my brother—alas! I have none—I should do the same without hesitation. But with a cousin, that’s different. Besides, papa don’t like this cousin of mine, for some reason or another. I wonder what he can have against him. I can’t see; and surely it can be no reason for my not liking him? And, surely his being my cousin is just why I should go down and talk to him.”

“Besides,” continued the young girl, speaking to herself rather than to the maid, “he ap-

pears very, very impatient. Papa may keep him waiting, who knows how long? since he is so taken up with this Mr. Montagu What's-his-name! Well, I may be doing wrong: perhaps papa will be angry: perhaps he won't know anything about it! Right or wrong, I'll go! I shall go!"

So saying, the young creole snatched a scarf from the fauteuil, flung it over her shoulders, and, gliding from the chamber, entered the summer-house.

Herbert had not quite recovered from surprise at the unexpected apparition, when he was saluted by the endearing interrogatory—

"Are you my cousin?"

The question, so naively put, remained for a moment unanswered; for the tone of kindness in which it was spoken had caused him a fresh surprise, and he was too much confused to make answer.

He soon found speech, however; for the hypothetical reply:

"If you are the daughter of Mr. Loftus Vaughan—"

"I am."

"Then I am proud of calling myself your cousin. I am Herbert Vaughan, from England."

Still under the influence of the slight which he believed had been put upon him, Herbert made this announcement with a certain stiffness of manner, which the young girl could not fail to notice. It produced a momentary incongruity, that was in danger of degenerating into a positive coolness; and Kate, who had come forth under the promptings of an affectionate instinct, trembled under a repulse, the cause of which she could not comprehend.

It did not, however, hinder her from courteously rejoining:

"We were expecting you, as father had received your letter, but not to-day. Papa said, not before to-morrow. Permit me, cousin, to welcome you to Jamaica."

Herbert bowed profoundly.

Again the young creole felt her warm impulses painfully checked; and, blushing with embarrassment, she stood in an attitude of indecision.

Herbert, whose heart had been melting like snow under a tropic sun, now became sensible that he was committing a rudeness, which so far from being natural to him, was costing him a struggle to counterfeit.

Why should the sins of the father be visited on the child, and such a child?

With a reflection kindred to this, the young man hastened to change his attitude of cold reserve.

"Thanks for your kind welcome!" said he, now speaking in a tone of affectionate frankness: "but, fair cousin, you have not told me your name."

"Catherine; though I am usually addressed by the shorter synonym, Kate."

"Catherine! that is a family name with us. My father's mother, and your father's, too—our grandmamma—was a Catherine. Was it also your mother's name?"

"No; my mother was called Quasheba."

"Quasheba! that is a very singular name."

"Do you think so, cousin? I am sometimes called Quasheba myself, only by the old people of the plantation, who knew my mother. Lilly Quasheba they call me. Papa does not like it, and forbids them."

"Was your mother an Englishwoman?"

"Oh, no! she was born in Jamaica, and died while I was very young, too young to remember her. Indeed, cousin, I may say I never knew what it was to have a mother!"

"Nor I much, cousin Kate. My mother also died early. But are you my only cousin?—No sisters nor brothers?"

"Not one. Ah! I wish I had sisters and brothers!"

"Why do you wish that?"

"Oh, how can you ask such a question? For companions, of course."

"Fair cousin! I should think you would find companions enough in this beautiful island."

"Ah! enough, perhaps; but none whom I like, at least, not as I think I should like a sister or brother. Indeed," added the young girl, in a reflective tone, "I sometimes feel lonely enough!"

"Ah!"

"Perhaps, now that we are to have guests, it will be different. Mr. Smythje is very amusing."

"Mr. Smythje! Who is he?"

"What! you do not know Mr. Smythje? I thought that you and he came over in the same ship! Papa said so; and that you were not to be here until to-morrow. I think you have taken him by surprise in coming to-day. But why did you not ride out with Mr. Smythje? He arrived here only one hour before you, and has just dined with us. I have left the table this moment, for papa and him to have their cigars. But, bless me, cousin! Pardon me for not asking—perhaps you have not dined yet?"

"No," replied Herbert, in a tone that expressed chagrin, "nor am I likely to dine here to-day."

This storm of queries with which, in the sim-

plicity of her heart, the young creole thus assailed him, once more brought back that train of bitter reflections from which her fair presence and sweet converse had for the moment rescued him. Hence the character of his reply.

"And why, cousin Herbert?" asked she, with a marked air of surprise. "If you have not dined, it is not too late. Why not here?"

"Because"—and the young man drew himself proudly up—"I prefer going without dinner to dining where I am not welcome. In Mount Welcome, it seems, I am not welcome."

"Oh, cousin—!"

The words and the appealing accent were alike interrupted. The door upon the landing turned upon its hinge, and Loftus Vaughan appeared in the doorway.

"Your father?"

"My father!"

"Kate!" cried the planter, in a tone that bespoke displeasure, "Mr. Smythje would like to hear you play upon the harp. I have been looking for you in your room, and all over the house. What are you doing out there?"

The language was coarse and common—the manner that of a vulgar man flushed with wine.

"Oh, papa! cousin Herbert is here. He is waiting to see you."

"Come you here, then! Come at once. Mr. Smythje is waiting for you." And with this imperious rejoinder Mr. Vaughan re-entered the house.

"Cousin! I must leave you."

"Yes, I perceive it. One more worthy than I claims your company. Go! Mr. Smythje is impatient."

"It is papa."

"Kate! Kate! are you coming? Haste, girl! haste, I say!"

"Go, Miss Vaughan! Farewell!"

"Miss Vaughan! Farewell!"

Mystified and distressed by those strange-sounding words, the young girl stood for some seconds undecided, but the voice of her father came again ringing along the corridor, now in tones irate and commanding. Obedience could no longer be delayed; and with a half-puzzled, half-reproachful glance at her cousin, she reluctantly parted from his presence.

CHAPTER X.

A SURLY RECEPTION.

AFTER the young creole had disappeared within the entrance, Herbert remained in a state of indecision as to how he should act.

He no longer needed an interview with his uncle, for the sake of having an explanation. This new slight had crowned his convictions that he was there an unwelcome guest, and no possible apology could now retrieve the ill-treatment he had experienced.

He would have walked off on the instant without a word; but, stung to the quick by the series of insults he had received, the instinctive retaliation had sprung up within him, and determined him to stay—at all events, until he could meet his relative face to face, and reproach him with his unnatural conduct. He was recklessly indifferent as to the result.

With this object he continued in the kiosk, his patience being now baited with the prospect of that slight satisfaction.

Shortly after a heavy footstep echoed along the passage. The door opened, and Herbert perceived it was his uncle, who had at length found time to honor him with an interview.

Though so joyous but the moment before, all traces of mirth had disappeared from the countenance of Loftus Vaughan when he presented himself before the eyes of his nephew. His face, habitually red, was fired with the wine he had been drinking to the hue of scarlet. Nevertheless, an ominous mottling of a darker color upon his broad, massive brow, foretold the ungracious reception his relative was likely to have at his hands.

His first words were uttered in a tone of insolent coolness:

"So you are my brother's son, are you?"

There was no extending of the hand, no gesture; not even a smile of welcome.

Herbert checked his anger, and simply answered:

"I believe so."

"And pray, sir, what errand has brought you out to Jamaica?"

"If you have received my letter, as I presume you have, it will have answered that question."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Vaughan, with an attempt at cynicism, but evidently taken down by the unexpected style of the reply. "And what, may I ask, do you purpose doing here?"

"Have not the slightest idea," answered Herbert, with a provoking air of independence.

"Have you any profession?"

"Unfortunately, not any."

"Any trade?—I suppose not."

"Your suppositions are perfectly correct."

"Then, sir, how do you expect to get your bread?"

"Earn it the best way I can."

"Beg it, more likely, as your father before you; all his life begging it, and from me."

"In that respect I shall not resemble him."

You would be the last man I should think of begging from."

"Sdeath! sirrah, you are impertinent. This is fine language to me, after the disgrace you have already brought upon me!"

"Disgrace?"

"Yes, sir, disgrace. Coming out here as a pauper, in the steerage of a ship! And you must needs boast of relationship—letting all the world know that you are my nephew."

"Boast of the relationship!" repeated Herbert, with a smile of contempt. "Ha! ha! ha! I suppose you refer to my having answered a question asked me by this pretty jack-a-box you are playing with. Boast of it, indeed! had I known you then as well as I do now, I should have been ashamed to acknowledge it."

"After that, sir," shouted Mr. Vaughan, turning purple with rage—"after that, sir, no more words. You shall leave my house this minute."

"I had intended to have left it some minutes sooner. I only stayed to have an opportunity of telling you what I think of you."

"What is that, sir? what is that?"

The angry youth had summoned to the top of his tongue a few of the strongest epithets he could think of, and was about to hurl them into his uncle's teeth, when on glancing up he caught sight of an object that caused him to change his intention. It was the beautiful face of the young creole, that appeared through the half-open lattice of the window opposite. She was gazing down upon him and his uncle, and listening to the dialogue with an anguished expression of countenance.

"He is her father," muttered Herbert to himself; "for her sake I shall not say the words;" and without making any reply to the last interrogatory of his uncle, he strode out of the kiosk, and was walking away.

"Stay, sir!" cried the planter, somewhat taken aback by the turn things had taken. "A word before you go—if you are going."

Herbert turned upon his heel and listened.

"Your letter informs me that you are without funds. It shall not be said that a relative of Loftus Vaughan left his house penniless and unprovided. In this purse there are twenty pounds currency of the island. Take it; but on the condition that you say nothing of what has occurred here; and, furthermore, that you keep to yourself that you are the nephew of Loftus Vaughan."

Without saying a word, Herbert took the proffered purse; but, in the next moment, the chink of the gold pieces was heard upon the gravel walk as he dashed the bag at the feet of his uncle.

Then, turning to the astonished planter, and measuring him with a look that scorned all patronage, he faced once more to the path, and walked proudly away.

The angry "Begone, sir!" vociferated after him was only addressed to his back, and was altogether unheeded. Perhaps it was even unheard, for the expression in the eyes of the young man told that at that moment his attention was occupied elsewhere.

As he walked toward the house, with the design of going round it to get upon the front avenue, his glance was directed upward to the window where that beautiful face had been just seen. The lattice was now closed, and he endeavored to pierce the somber shadows behind it. The face was no longer there. No eyes met his.

He glanced back toward the kiosk to see if he might linger a moment. His uncle was in a bent attitude, gathering the scattered pieces of gold. In this position, the shrubbery concealed him.

Herbert was about to glide nearer to the window, and summon his cousin by name, when he heard his own pronounced, in a soft whisper, and with the endearing prefix "cousin."

Distinctly he heard "Cousin Herbert!" and as if spoken around the angle of the building.

He hastened thither, for that was his proper path by which to arrive at the front of the house.

On turning the wall, he looked up. He saw that another window opened from the same chamber. Thence came the sweet summons, and there appeared the fair face for which he was searching.

"Oh, cousin Herbert, do not go in anger! Papa has done wrong, very wrong, I know; but he has been taking much wine; he is not—Good cousin, you will pardon him?"

Herbert was about to make reply, when the young creole continued:

"You said in your letter you had no money. You have refused father's, you will not refuse mine! It is very little. It is all I have. Take it."

A bright object glistened before his eyes, and fell with a metallic chink at his feet. He looked down. A small silk purse, containing coin, with a blue ribbon attached, was seen lying upon the ground.

The young man raised it, and, holding it in one hand, hesitated for a moment, as if he had thoughts of accepting it. It was not that, however, but another thought that was passing in his mind.

His resolve was soon taken.

"Thanks!" said he. "Thanks, cousin Kate!" he added, with increasing warmth. "You have meant kindly, and though we may never meet again—"

"Oh, say not so!" interrupted the young girl, with an appealing look.

"Yes," continued he, "it is probable we never shall. Here there is no home for me. I must go hence; but, wherever I may go, I shall not soon forget this kindness. I may never have an opportunity of repaying it—you are beyond the necessity of aught that a humble relative could do for you; but remember, Kate Vaughan, should you ever stand in need of a strong arm and a stout heart, there is one of your name who will not fail you.

"Thanks!" he repeated, detaching the ribbon from the bag, and flinging the latter, with its contents, back through the open window. Then, fastening the ribbon to the breast-button of his coat, he added: "I shall feel richer with the possession of this token than with all the wealth of your father's estate. Farewell! and God bless you, my generous cousin!"

Before the young creole could repeat her offer, or add another word of counsel or consolation, he had turned the angle of the building, and passed out of sight.

CHAPTER XI.

THE JEW'S PENN.

WHILE these scenes were transpiring upon the plantation of Mount Welcome, others of a still more exciting nature were being enacted on that which adjoined it, the property of Jacob Jessuron, slave-merchant and penn-keeper.

In the olden time, this plantation had borne the name of "Happy Valley," but, during the ownership of Jessuron, this designation—perhaps deemed inappropriate—had been generally dropped, and the place was never spoken of by any other name than that of the "Jew's Penn." Into a "penn" (grazing farm) Jessuron had changed it, and it served well enough for the purpose, many of the old sugar-fields, now overgrown by the valuable Guinea grass, affording excellent pasturage for horses and cattle.

In addition to penn-keeper, the Jew was also an extensive spice cultivator, or rather spice-gatherer; for the indigenous pimento forests that covered the hills upon his estate required no cultivation—nothing further than to collect the aromatic berries, and cure them on the *barba-oo*.

Outside the gate-entrance, upon the broad avenue leading to the main road, negro horse-tamers might every day be seen, giving their first lessons to rough colts fresh caught from the pastures; while inside the grand inclosure, fat oxen were being slaughtered to supply the markets of the Bay—huge, gaunt dogs holding carnival over the offal, while black butchers, naked to the waist, their brown arms reeking with red gore, stalked over the ground, brandishing blood-stained blades, and other instruments of their sanguinary calling.

Such scenes might be witnessed diurnally on the estate of Jacob Jessuron; but on the day succeeding that on which the slave-merchant had made his unsuccessful errand to Mount Welcome, a spectacle of a somewhat rarer kind was about to be exhibited at the penn.

The scene chosen for this exhibition was an inner inclosure, or court-yard, contiguous to the dwelling—the great house itself forming one side of this court, and opening upon it by a broad veranda, of a dingy, dilapidated appearance.

There were white men in the court-yard—three of them. Two were of dark complexion, so swarth that many of the colored slaves were as fair-skinned as they. These two men were lounging by the stairway of the veranda, one of them seated upon the steps. Both were sparsely clad in check shirts and trousers, having broad-brimmed palmetto hats on their heads, and rough buskins on their feet and ankles.

Each carried a long rapier-like blade—a *machete*—hanging over his hip in its leathern sheath; while a brace of fierce dogs, looped in cotton rope leashes, attached to belts worn around their waists, crouched upon the ground at their feet.

The exclamations that from time to time escaped from their lips, with the few words of conversation that passed between them, bespoke them of Spanish race. Their costume, their arms and accouterments, their comrades, the fierce dogs, plainly proclaimed their calling, as well as the country from whence they came. They were *cacadores de negros*—negro-bunters from the Island of Cuba.

The third white man who appeared in the court-yard differed essentially from these; not so much in color, for he was also of swarth complexion, but in size, costume and calling. A pair of horse-skin riding boots reached up to his thighs, on the heels of which appeared heavy spurs, with rowels three inches in diameter. A sort of monkey-jacket of thick cloth, notwithstanding its unsuitableness to the climate, hung down to his hips; under which appeared a waistcoat of scarlet plush, with tarnished metal buttons, and a wool comforter of the

same flaming color. Crowning all was a felt hat; which, like the other articles of his dress, gave evidence of exposure to all weathers, sun and rain, storm and tornado.

A thick shock of curling hair, so dark in color as to pass for black; a heavy beard, jet-black, and running most of the way around his mouth; amber-colored eyes, with a sinister, shining light that never seemed to pale; lips of an unnatural redness gleaming through the black beard; and a nose of aquiline oblique, were the points in the personal appearance of this man that most prominently presented themselves.

The effect of this combination was to impress you with the conviction that the individual in question belonged to the same nationality as the proprietor of the penn. Such was in reality the case; for the bearded man was another of the race of Abraham, and one of its least amiable specimens. His name was Ravener, his calling that of overseer; he was the overseer of Jessuron. The symbol of his profession he carried under his arm—a huge cart-whip. He had it by him at all hours, by night, as by day; for by night, as by day, was he accustomed to make use of it. And the victims of his long lash were neither oxen nor horses—they were men and women!

It was about twelve o'clock in the day. Jessuron and his daughter had just stepped forth into the veranda, and taken their stand by the balustrade looking down into the court.

A small iron furnace, filled with live coals, had been placed in the court-yard, near the bottom of the steps. Three or four sullen-looking men—blacks and mulattoes—stood around it in lounging attitudes. One of these stooped over the furnace, turning in the fire what appeared to be a soldering-iron, or some other instrument of a brazier.

"Go on, Mishter Ravener!" cried the Jew, on reaching the front of the veranda. "Theesh first," he added, pointing toward a group of Eboes, who stood trembling with apprehension in one corner of the yard.

The Eboes were led forward, and held firmly by the assistants, while their breasts were presented to receive the brand. The red-hot iron flashed for a moment in the eyes of each, and then fell with a dull clap upon the clammy skin. Smoke ascended with a hiss, till the court became filled with a smell of roasting flesh! A struggle, some wild cries, and the operation was over. The slave was marked with those indelible initials, to be carried with him to his grave.

A batch of Pawpaws, from the Whidaw country, came next. They were brought up one by one, like the Eboes, but altogether unlike these was their behavior. They neither gave way to extreme fear, nor yet displayed extraordinary courage. They appeared to submit with a sort of docile resignation, as though they regarded it in the light of a destiny or duty.

A group of Coromantees were now to undergo the fiery ordeal. These bold and warlike indigenes of Africa evinced, by their attitudes and actions, the possession of a moral nature altogether different from that either of Pawpaw or Eboe. Instead of waiting to be led forward, each stepped boldly up, as he did so baring his breast to receive the red brand, at which he glanced with an air of lordly contempt.

One young fellow even seized the iron from the grasp of the operator, and, turning it in his hand, struck the stamp firmly against his breast, where he held it until the seething flesh told that a deep imprint had been made. Then, flinging the instrument back into the furnace, he strode away from the spot with the air of a triumphant gladiator.

At this moment there occurred a pause in the proceedings—not as if the drama was ended, but only an act. Another was yet to come.

Ravener stepped up to the veranda, in front of the place where Jessuron and his daughter stood.

"Which next?" was the question put by Ravener to the Jew; "the Mandingoes?"

"Either them or the prinshe," replied Jessuron; "it don't matter which ish marked first."

"Oh! the prince first, by all means," suggested the amiable Judith, with a smile of satisfaction. "Bring him out first, Mr. Ravener; I'm curious to see how his royal highness will stand fire."

The overseer made no reply; but, taking the wish of the young lady as a command, proceeded to obey it.

Stepping across the court, he opened a door that led into a room, separate from that in which the slaves had been lodged.

The overseer entered the room; and in a few minutes came out again, bringing with him an individual who by his dress it might have been difficult to recognize as the young Fellatta seen on board the slaver, but whose noble mien still rendered it possible to identify him: for it was he.

Changed, indeed, was his costume. The turban was gone, the rich silken tunic, the sandals and cimier—all his finery had been stripped off; and in its place appeared a coarse Osnaburg shirt and trousers—the dress of a plantation negro.

He looked wretched, but not crestfallen.

He had no idea of what was now designed for him. He had been shut up in a windowless room, and saw nothing of the spectacle that had just passed. Some new outrage he anticipated, but of what nature he could not guess.

He was not allowed to remain long in ignorance. Ravener, roughly grasping him by the wrist, led him up to the furnace.

The iron by this time was ready, glowing red-hot among the coals. The operator stood watching for the signal to use it, and on its being given he seized the instrument in his grasp and poised it aloft.

The prince now perceived the intention, but shrunk not at the sight. His eyes were not upon the iron, but, gleaming with a fire like that of the furnace itself, were directed upon the face of the old Jew—at intervals upon that of the angel-like demon at his side.

The Jew alone shrunk from the glance; his daughter returned it with a mocking imperturbability.

In another instant the red brand hissed as it burnt into the flesh of the Fellatta's bosom. Prince Cingues was the slave of Jacob Jessuron!

As if the terrible reality had now for the first time burst upon him, the young man sprung forward with a cry, and before any one could oppose his progress he had bounded up the steps and entered the veranda.

Then gliding along the gallery to the spot occupied by Jessuron and his daughter, he lunched himself forward upon the Jew. As he clutched the latter by the throat, both came together to the ground, and rolled over and over in the writhings of a desperate struggle.

Fortunate it was for the slave-merchant that his victim had been disarmed, else that moment would have been fatal to him. As it was, he came very near being strangled, and had it not been for Ravener and the two Spaniards, who hastened to his rescue, the betrayal of the Foolah prince would have been the last treason of his life.

Overpowered by numbers, Cingues was at length secured, and the throat of the slave-merchant was extricated from his death-like clutch.

"Kill him!" cried the Jew, as soon as he found breath to speak. "No, don't kill him yet," added he, correcting himself; "not joosh yet, till I punish him for it. An' if I don't punish him—ach!"

"Flog the savage!" shouted the beautiful Judith; "make an example of him, Mr. Ravener, else those others will be rising upon us in the same style."

"Yesh, flog him! That'll do to begin with. Flog him now, goot Ravener. Give him a hundred lashes this minute."

"Ay, ay," responded the overseer, dragging the victim down the steps; "I'll give him a full dose—never fear you!"

Ravener was as good as his word. The spectacle that followed was even more horrible to behold than that which has been described, for the punishment of the lash is among the most fearful of exhibitions.

The young Foolah was tied to a post—one that stood there for the purpose. A strong headman wielded the cruel *quirt*; and as the last stripe was administered, completing that horrid hundred, the poor victim sunk fainting against the blood-stained stake.

CHAPTER XII.

A COUCH OF SILK COTTON.

ON parting from the presence of his fair cousin, and at the same time from the house of his inhospitable relative, Herbert Vaughn struck off through the shrubbery that stretched toward the ridge on the right.

On reaching the limits of the level platform he leaped a low wall that separated the shrubbery from the outer fields, and then, under cover of the pimento groves, commenced ascending the slope of the ridge.

On reaching the crest of the ridge, and before plunging into the deep forest that stretched away on the other side, he endeavored through an opening in the trees to catch a view of those white walls and green jalousies. In that glance there was more of regretfulness than anger—an expression of despair, such as may have appeared on the face of the fallen angel when gazing back over the golden palings of Paradise.

As the young man turned away and entered under the somber shadows of the forest, the expression of despair seemed to become deeper and darker.

He walked on through the woods without taking much heed as to the direction in which he was going. Any one who could have seen him just then might have supposed that he had lost his way, and was wandering.

The trees hindered him from seeing the sun, now low down. But even if a view of the golden orb had been afforded him it would have served no purpose, since on riding out to Mount Welcome he had taken no note of the relative directions between it and the bay.

He was not much disconcerted by the discovery that he had lost himself. The reflection that in Montego Bay he would be no better off

hindered him from greatly regretting the circumstance. He had not the means to command the shelter of a roof, even in the midst of a whole city full, and the chances were he might find none better than that which was above him at the moment—the spreading fronds of a gigantic cotton-tree.

Now that he had come to a halt, and having nothing better to do, he took his stand, watching the open glade. Perhaps some bird might yet show itself passing from tree to tree, or flying about in pursuit of prey. It was the hour for owls. He felt hungry enough to eat one.

Neither owl nor night jar came in sight; but his attention was attracted by an object edible as either, and which promised to relieve him from the pangs he was suffering.

Close by the cotton-tree stood another giant of the forest, rivaling the former in height, but differing from it as an arrow from its bow. Straight as a lance, it rose to the height of an hundred feet. It was branchless as a column of polished malachite or marble, up to its high summit, where its long green fronds, radiating outward, drooped gracefully over, like a circlet of reflexed ostrich plumes.

A child could have told it to be a palm; but Herbert knew more. He had heard of the noble "mountain-cabbage" of Jamaica, the kingly *areca oredoxia*. He knew that in the center of that circlet of far-stretching fronds, in that crown, there was a jewel that had often proved more precious than gems or gold, for often had it been the means of saving human life.

How was this jewel to be obtained? Like all crowns, it was placed high—far above the reach of ordinary mortals. Young and active though he was, and a climber at school, he could never "swarm up" that tall, smooth shaft. Without a ladder a hundred feet in length, it would not be possible to reach its summit.

But, seel the palm-tree stands not alone. A great black liana stretches tortuously from the earth up to the crown, where its head is buried among the tufted leaves, as if it were some huge dragon in the act of devouring its victim.

Herbert stood for a moment reconnoitering the grand stay-cable, that, trailing from the summit of the palm, offered, as it were, a natural ladder for ascending it. Hunger stimulated him to the attempt; and, resting his gun against the trunk of the *ceiba*, he commenced climbing upward.

Without much difficulty he succeeded in reaching the top, and making his way among the huge *pinnae* of the leaves, each in itself a leaf of many feet in length. He arrived at the youngest of them all, that still infolded in the envelope of the bud, and which was the object for which he had climbed.

With his knife he separated the summit leaf from the stem, flung it to the earth, and then descending to the bottom of the tree, made his supper upon the raw but sweet and succulent shoots of the mountain cabbage.

Supper over, he collected a quantity of the strewn fleece of the silk-cotton, and placing it between two of the great buttress-like root-spurs of the tree, constructed for himself a couch on which, but for some hard thoughts within, he might have slept as softly and as soundly as upon a bed of eider.

That he did not sleep soundly may be attributed solely to his anxieties about the morrow, for the night was mild throughout, and the composition of his improvised couch kept him sufficiently warm. His cares, however, had rendered his spirit restless. They were vivid enough to act even upon his dreams, which several times during the night awoke him, and again, finally, just after the break of day.

He felt hunger, even more than on the preceding night; and, although the raw mountain-cabbage offered no very tempting *dejeuner*, he determined before starting to make another meal upon it, remembering, and very wisely acting upon, the adage of "a bird in the hand."

But another appetite, far more unpleasant to bear, now assailed him. In truth, it had assailed him long before, but had been gradually growing stronger, until it was now almost unendurable.

Upon the previous evening, while upon the crown of the cabbage-palm, he had glanced slantingly across among the branches of the *ceiba*. This, as with all great trees in the tropical forest, was loaded with parasites—*vriesias*, long ragged-looking cacti, bromelias, epiphytical orchids, and the like. *Tillandsias*, too, of the kind known as "wild pines," grew in the forks, or on the upper surface of the great limbs, flourishing as luxuriantly as if their roots rested in the richest soil. Among them was conspicuous the most magnificent of the genus, the noble *Tillandsia lingulata*, with its spike of gorgeous crimson flowers projecting from the midst of its broad sheathing leaves. It was in the concavities of these huge leaves that Herbert had observed something which did not belong to the plant—something he believed to be water.

Ere long, he had succeeded in reaching a main fork of the *ceiba* where nestled one of the largest of the wild pines.

He had not been deceived. In a hollow form-

ed by one of its huge ventricose leaves was the natural reservoir he had noticed—the gathering of dew and rain, which the rays of the sun could never reach.

At his approach the green *hyla* sprung out from this aerial pool, and leaping, frog-like, from leaf to leaf—guarded against falling by the clammy sponge-disks of its feet—soon disappeared amid the foliage. It was this singular creature whose voice Herbert had been hearing throughout the livelong night; and which, in constant chorus with others of its kind, had recalled to his memory the groaning and working of the Sea Nymph in a storm.

The presence of the tree toad in this, its natural haunt, did not deter the young man from drinking. Raging thirst has no scruples, and, bending over one of the leaves of the *Tillandsia*, he placed his lips to the cool water and freely quaffed it.

The labor of scrambling had taken away his breath, and to some extent fatigued him. Instead, therefore, of descending at once—which he knew would cost him an effort equal to that of the ascent—he determined to rest for a few minutes upon the large limb of the *ceiba* on which he had seated himself.

"Well!" muttered he, in satisfied soliloquy, "if the people of this island have proved inhospitable, I can't say the same of its trees. Here are two of them—almost the first I have encountered; they have yielded me the three necessities of life—meat, drink and lodging—lodging, too, with an excellent bed—a thing not so common in many a human hostelry. What more is wanted? Under such a sky as this, who need care to have walls around or a roof over him? Verily, to sleep here, *sub Jove*, is rather a luxury than an inconvenience! And, verily," continued he, "were it not that I should feel rather lonely, and that man is designed to be a social animal, I might pass my whole life in these glorious woods, without work or care of any kind. No doubt there is game, and I was told at home there are no game laws, so I might poach at pleasure. Ha! game! What do I see? A deer? No! a hog! Yes, hog it is; but such a singular fellow—prick-ears, red bristles, long legs, and tusks. A wild boar!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOG-HUNTER AND THE RUNAWAY.

THE boar had stopped over the debris of Herbert's breakfast—some fragments of the mountain cabbage which had been left upon the ground. Switching his feathered tail, and uttering a short grunt, expressive of satisfaction, the animal proceeded to snap up the scattered pieces, crunching them between his formidable grinders.

All of a sudden the tranquil tableau became transformed into a scene of a more exciting nature. As Herbert continued to gaze, he saw the boar suddenly make a start, jerk his muzzle high in the air, at the same instant uttering a peculiar cry. It was a cry of alarm, mingled with angry menace, as testified by the bristles upon his back, which had suddenly shot up into an erect spinous mane.

Just then a loud report reverberated through the glade, a bullet hissed through the air, and the animal, with a shrill scream, turned over upon its back, the blood spouting from a wound in its thigh.

In an instant it was on its feet again, but rage appeared to hinder it from attempting flight! It retreated only a few paces, taking its stand between two of the buttresses of the *ceiba*, on the very spot where the young Englishman had passed the night. There, protected on both flanks and in the rear, and uttering fierce grunts of defiance, it stood, as if awaiting an enemy.

Soon after a man emerged from the under-wood, armed with what appeared to be a straight sword or cutlass.

In a dozen quick strides he crossed the glade, and, having reached the roots of the cotton-tree, became engaged in a deadly struggle with the wounded boar.

After a while the struggle between biped and quadruped was brought to a termination. The former, who appeared to possess all the craft of his calling, put in practice a ruse that enabled him to give his antagonist the *coup de grace*.

Thus was the feat accomplished. In charging forward upon his human adversary, the boar had incautiously ventured beyond the flanking buttresses of the tree. In fact, the hunter had enticed the animal outward, by making a feint of retreating from the contest.

Just then, and before the brute could divine his intention, the hunter rushed forward, and throwing all his strength into the effort, sprang high into the air. Quite clearing the quadruped, he alighted in the angle formed by the converging spurs of the tree.

The boar had now lost his position of defense, though that of the hunter for the moment appeared desperate. He had calculated his chances, however, for, before the enraged animal, hindered by its hanging limb, could face round to assail him, he had lunged out his long blade, and buried it up to the hilt between the creature's ribs.

With a shrill scream the boar fell prostrate to the earth, the red stream from his side spurting

over and spoiling the improvised mattress of cotton-tree flock upon which the young Englishman had passed the night.

Up to this moment the latter had done nothing, either by word or gesture, to make known his presence. He was about to descend and congratulate the hunter for the performance of a feat that had filled him with admiration. A fancy passing through his mind at the moment determined him to remain where he was a little longer; and, in obedience to this fancy, he sat gazing down upon the successful sportsman at the bottom of the tree.

The complexion of the hunter betokened a *sang-mele*, between African and Caucasian, which was further confirmed by the slight crisping that appeared among the jet-black curls of hair thickly covering his head. The luxuriance of these curls was partly kept in check by a head-dress that Herbert Vaughan would have been less surprised to see in some country of the East; for at the first glance he had mistaken it for a turban; on closer examination, however, it proved to be a brilliant kerchief—the Madras check—ingeniously folded around the forehead, so as to sit coquettishly over the crown, with the knot a little to one side. It was a *toque*, not a turban.

The other articles of dress worn by the young hunter were an outer coat, or shirt, of sky-blue cottonade, cut somewhat blouse-fashion; an under-shirt of fine white linen, ruffled and open at the breast; trowsers of the same material as the coat, and buff-colored boots of roughly-cleaned cowskin. There were straps and strings over both shoulders, all crossing each other on the breast.

From the two that hung to the right side were suspended a powder-horn and skin shot-pouch; on the same side hung a large calabash canteen, covered with a strong network of some forest withe to protect it from injury. Under the left arm was a carved and curving cow's horn, evidently not for holding powder, since it was open at both ends; below this, against his hip, rested a black leathern sheath—the receptacle of that long blade still reeking with the blood of the boar.

This weapon was the *machete*—half sword, half hunting-knife—which, with its straight, short blade and haft-like hilt of grayish horn, is to be found in every cottage of Spanish America, from California to the "Land of Fire." Even where the Spaniards have been, but are no longer—as in Jamaica—the universal *machete* may be seen in the hands of hunter and peasant—a relic of the conqueror colonists.

Up to the moment that the boar was laid prostrate upon the ground, he in the *toque* had been kept too well employed with his fierce game to find time for looking at anything else. It was only after dealing the death-blow to his adversary that he was able to stand erect and take a survey around him.

In an instant his eye fell upon the gun of the young Englishman; and then the white pieces of palm-cabbage upon which the boar had been browsing.

"Hoh!" exclaimed he, still gasping for breath, but with a look that betrayed surprise, "a gun! Whose? Some runaway slave who has stolen his master's fowling-piece? Nothing more likely. But why has he left the piece behind him? and what has started him away from here? Surely not the boar? He must have been gone before the animal got up? *Crambo!* a richer prize than the porker, if I could only have set eyes on him! I wonder in which direction he has tracked it? Hish! what do I see? The runaway! yes—yes, it is he! Coming back for his gun! *Crambo!* This is unexpected luck, so early in the morning—a slave capture—a bounty!"

As the hunter hurriedly muttered these concluding phrases, he glided with stealthy tread between the two buttresses, and, having placed himself in the extreme angle of their convergence, remained perfectly still, as if to await the approach of some one who was advancing toward the tree.

Herbert, from his perch, had a full view of the new comer thus announced.

A young man of a copper-red color, with straight black hair, shaggily tossed and pulled over his forehead, as if some one had been tearing it from his head! His face, too, a fine one, notwithstanding its mahogany color, appeared freshly lacerated, and his whole body bore the marks of inhuman abuse. The coarse cotton shirt that covered his shoulders was blotched with blood; and long, crimson-colored stripes running across his back looked like the imprints of an ensanguined lash!

The attitude in which he was advancing was as peculiar as his costume. When Herbert first set eyes on him he was crawling upon his hands and knees, yet going with considerable speed. This led to the belief that his bent position was assumed rather with a view toward concealment, than from inability to walk erect.

The belief was soon after confirmed, for on entering the glade the young man rose to his feet and trotted on, but still with body bent, toward the *ceiba*.

What could he want there?

Was he making for the huge tree as a haven

of safety from some deadly pursuers? Herbert fancied so.

The hunter believed he was coming back for his gun, having no suspicion that the real owner of the piece was just over his head.

Both remained silent, though from motives having no similitude to each other.

In a few seconds' time, the fugitive—for his actions proved him one—had reached the bottom of the tree.

"Halt!" cried the hunter, showing himself round the buttress, and stepping in front of the new-comer. "You are a runaway, and my prisoner!"

The fugitive dropped upon his knees, crossed his arms over his breast, and uttered some phrases in an unknown tongue, among which Herbert could distinguish the word "Allah!"

His captor appeared equally at fault about the meaning of the words, but neither the attitude of the speaker, nor the expression of his countenance, could be mistaken; it was an appeal for mercy.

"*Crambo!*" exclaimed the hunter, bending forward, and gazing for a moment at the breast of the runaway, on which the letters "J. J." were conspicuously branded; "with that tattoo on your skin, I don't wonder you've given leg-bail to your master. Poor devil! they've tattooed you still more brutally upon the back."

As he said this, speaking rather to himself than to the wretched creature that knelt before him, the hunter stretched forth his hand, raised the shirt from the shoulders of the runaway, and gazed for awhile upon his naked back. The skin was covered with purple wales, crossing each other like the arteries in an anatomic plate!

"God of the Christian!" exclaimed the yellow hunter, with evident indignation at the sight; "if this be your decree, then give me the fetish of my African ancestors. But no," added he, after a pause, "J. J. is not a Christian; he cares for no God."

The soliloquy of the hunter was here interrupted by a second speech from the suppliant, spoken in the same unknown tongue.

This time the gesture signified that it was an appeal for protection against some enemy in the rear, for the sympathetic looks of his captor had evidently won the confidence of the fugitive.

"They are after you, no doubt of it," said the hunter. "Well, let them come, whoever are your pursuers. This time they have lost their chance; and the bounty is mine, not theirs. Poor devil! it goes against my grain to deliver you up; and were it not for the law that binds me, I should scorn their paltry reward. Hark! yonder they come! Dogs! as I'm a man! Yes, it's the bay of a bloodhound! Those villainous man-hunters of Batabano; I knew old Jessuron had them in his pay."

Here, my poor fellow, in here!" and the hunter half-led, half-dragged the fugitive over the carcass of the wild boar, placing him between the buttresses of the *ceiba*. "Stand close in to the angle," he continued; "leave me to guard the front; here's your gun; I see it's loaded; I hope you know how to use it! Don't fire till you're sure of hitting! We'll need both blade and shot to save ourselves from these Spanish dogs, that will make no distinction between you and me; not they! *Crambo!* there they come!"

The words had scarce issued from the speaker's lips, when two large dogs broke, with a swishing noise, out of the bushes on the opposite side of the glade, evidently running on the trail of the fugitive.

The crimson color of their muzzles showed that they had been baited with blood, which, darkening as it dried, rendered more conspicuous the white fang-like teeth within their jaws.

They were half hound, half-mastiff, but ran as true-bred hounds on a fresh trail.

No trail could have been fresher than that of the flogged fugitive, and, in a few seconds after entering the glade, the hounds had got up to the *ceiba*, in front of the triangular chamber in which stood the runaway and his protector.

These dogs have no instinct of self-preservation—only an instinct to discover and destroy. Without stopping to bark or bay—without even slackening their pace—both dashed onward, bounding into the air as they lunched themselves upon the supposed objects of their pursuit.

The first only impaled himself upon the outstretched *machete* of the yellow hunter; and as the animal came down to the earth, it was to utter the last howl of his existence.

The other, springing toward the naked fugitive, received the contents of the fowling-piece, and, like the first, rolled lifeless upon the earth.

CHAPTER XIV.

A COMBAT DECLINED.

THE spectator in the tree began to fancy that he was dreaming. Within the short space of twenty minutes he had been the witness of a greater number of exciting events than he might have seen, in his own land, during the same number of years!

Nothing, however, had yet transpired to tempt him from a strict neutrality; and, until something should, be determined to preserve the passive attitude he had hitherto held.

Scarce had he come to this determination, when three new actors appeared upon the scene.

One, the foremost, and apparently the leader, was a tall, black-bearded man in a red plush waistcoat and high-topped horse-skin boots. The other two were lean, lithe-looking fellows, in striped shirt and trousers, each wearing broad-brimmed palm-leaf hats that shadowed their sharp Spanish physiognomies.

The bearded man, who appeared to be the leader, was the first to give speech to the sentiment that animated all three.

"What game's this?" he cried, his face turning purple with rage. "Who are you that has dared to interfere with our pursuit?"

"*Carajo!* he's killed our dogs!" vociferated one of the Spaniards.

"*Demonios!* you'll pay for this with your lives!" added the other, raising his *machete* in menace.

"And what if I have killed your dogs?" rejoined the yellow hunter, with an air of *sang froid*, which won the silent applause of the spectator. "What if I have? If I had not killed them, they would have killed me."

"No," said one of the Spaniards; "they would not have touched you. *Carrambo!* they were too well trained for that; they were after him. Why did you put yourself in the way to protect him? It's no business of yours."

"There, my worthy friend, you are mistaken," replied he in the *toque*, with a significant sneer. "It is my business to protect him—my interest, too, since he is my captive."

"Your captive!" exclaimed one of the men, with a glance of concern.

"Certainly, he is my captive; and it was my interest not to let the dogs destroy him. Dead, I should only have got two pounds currency on his head; living, he is worth twice that, and mileage money to boot; though I'm sorry to see by the 'J. J.' on his breast that the mileage money won't amount to much. Now, what have you to say, my worthy gentlemen?"

"Only this," cried the man with the black beard, "that we listen to no such nonsense as that there. Whoever you may be, I don't care. I suspect who you are; but that don't hinder me from telling you you've no business to meddle in this affair. This runaway slave belongs to Jacob Jessuron. I'm his overseer. He's been taken on Jessuron's own ground; therefore you can't claim the captive, nor yet the bounty. So you'll have to give him up to us!"

"*Carrambo, si!*" vociferated both the Spaniards in a breath, at the same time that the three advanced toward the runaway; the bearded overseer pistol in hand, and his two comrades with their *machetes* drawn, and ready to be used.

"Come on, then!" cried the hunter, in a taunting tone, as he spoke making signs to the runaway to stand to his defense. "Come on, but remember the first that lays hand upon him is a dead man! There are three of you, and we are but two—one already half-dead with your inhuman cruelty."

"Three against two! that's not a fair fight!" cried the young Englishman, dropping down from the tree, and ranging himself on the weaker side. "Perhaps it'll be a better match now," added he, taking a pistol from under the breast of his coat, and cocking it as he did so, evidently with the intention of using it should the affair be carried further.

"And who are you, sir?" demanded the overseer, with as much arrogance as he could throw into his manner. "Who, sir, may I inquire, is the white man who thus places himself in opposition to the laws of the island? You know the penalty, sir; and by my word, you shall pay it!"

"If I have committed a breach of the laws," replied Herbert. "I presume I shall have to answer for it. But I have yet to learn what law I have broken, and I don't choose that you shall be my judge."

"You are aiding in the escape of a slave."

"That's not true," interrupted the yellow hunter. "The slave is already captured—he could not have escaped; and this young gentleman—who is as much a stranger to me as to you—I am sure had no intention of assisting him to escape."

"*Ban!*" exclaimed the overseer; "we care not for your talk; we deny your right to capture him, and you had no business to interfere. We had already tracked him down with the dogs, and should have had him without any help from you. He is our prize, therefore, and I again demand of you to give him up."

"Indeed!" sneeringly responded the yellow hunter.

"I make the demand," continued the other, without noticing the sneer, "in the name of Jacob Jessuron, whose overseer I've told you I am."

"Perhaps were you Jacob Jessuron himself I might resist your demand," rejoined the hunter coolly, and without any appearance of braggadocio.

"You refuse to surrender him, then?" said the overseer, as if making his final overture.

"I do!" was the firm reply.

"Enough—you shall repent this; and you, sir,"

continued the deputy of Jessuron, turning a fierce look upon Herbert, "you shall answer before a magistrate for the part it has pleased you to play in this transaction. A pretty white man you for the island of Jamaica! A few more of your sort, and we'd have a nice time with our niggers. Don't fear, mister; you'll see me again."

"I have no particular desire," rejoined Herbert; "for certainly," continued he, with provoking jocularly, "an uglier-looking face than yours I have never set eyes upon; and it could be no pleasure to me to look upon it again."

"Confusion!" cried the overseer. "You'll repent that insult before you're a month older—curse me if you don't!"

And with this characteristic menace, the ruffian turned and walked sullenly away.

"*Caspita!*" cried one of the Spaniards, as the two hastened to follow their leader. "My brave dogs! Ah, *demonio!* you shall pay dearly for them. Two hundred pesos each; not a *cuartito* less!"

"Not a *cuartito* for either!" responded the yellow hunter, with a mocking laugh. "Haven't I proved that they are not worth it? With all your boasting of what your bloodhounds could do, look at them now. *Vaya!* my fine fellows! Go back to your own country, and hunt runaway negroes there. Here you must leave that game to those who know how to manage it—the Maroons!"

Herbert observed that the hunter, on pronouncing these last words, drew himself up with an air of majestic pride, as he did so glancing scornfully toward the crestfallen *cacadores*.

An angry "*Carrari!*" simultaneously hissed from the lips of both was the only reply made by the two Spaniards, who at the same instant turned their backs upon the *ceiba* and followed their leader across the glade.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAROONS.

AS soon as they were gone out of sight the hunter turned toward Herbert, his eyes sparkling with gratitude.

"Master," said he, making a low obeisance as he spoke, "after that, words are but a poor way of offering thanks. If the brave white gentleman who has risked his life for a colored outcast will let me know his name it will not be forgotten by Cubina, the Maroon."

"Cubina, the Maroon!"

Struck by the oddness of the name and title, as he had been by the appearance and behavior of him who bore them, Herbert repeated the phrase mechanically rather than otherwise.

"Yes, that is my name, master."

The young Englishman, though not yet enlightened as to the odd appellation, was too well bred to press for an explanation.

"Pardon me," said he, "for not directly replying to your request. I am an Englishman; my name is Vaughan—Herbert Vaughan."

"By that name, master, I take it you have relatives in the island. The owner of Mount Welcome estate—"

"Is my uncle."

"Ah, then, sir, anything a poor Maroon hunter could do for you would not be much. All the same, you have my thanks, and if—; but, master," continued the speaker, suddenly changing his tone, as if in obedience to some instinct of curiosity, "may I make bold to ask why you are afoot so early? The sun is not yet ten minutes above the trees, and Mount Welcome is three miles distant. You must have tracked it here in the dark; no easy matter through these tangled woods."

"I passed the night here," replied the Englishman, smiling; "that was my bed, where the boar is now sleeping."

"Then the gun is yours, not his?"

The hunter nodded interrogatively toward the runaway, who, standing some paces off, was regarding both the speakers with glances of gratitude, not, however, unmingled with some signs of uneasiness.

"Yes, it is my gun. I am very glad the piece was not empty, since it enabled him to destroy the fierce brute that would otherwise have had him by the throat. Wretched as the poor fellow appears, he handled his weapon well. What is he, and what have they been doing to him?"

"Ah, Master Vaughan, by those two questions it is easy to tell you are a stranger to the island. I think I can answer both, though I never saw the young man before. Poor wretch! The answers are written out upon his skin in letters that don't require much scholarship to read. Those upon his breast tell that he's a slave—the slave of J. J., Jacob Jessuron. You'll excuse me from giving my opinion of him."

"What have they done to you, my poor fellow?" asked Herbert of the runaway, his compassion hindering him from waiting for the more roundabout explanation of the Maroon.

The blood-bedaubed creature, perceiving that the speech was addressed to him, made a long rejoinder, but in a tongue unknown both to the

hunter and Herbert. The latter could distinguish two words that he had heard before, "Foolah" and "Allah," both of which occurred repeatedly in the speech.

"It's no use asking him, Master Vaughan. Like yourself, he's a stranger to the island, though, as you see, they've already initiated him into some of its ways. Those brands upon his breast are nearly fresh, as you may tell by the red skin around the letters. He's just been landed from Africa, it appears."

"From Africa, you say! He has not got negro features."

"As to his features, that don't signify. There are many African tribes who are not negro-featured. I can tell from this that he is a Foolah. I hear him use the word as he talks."

"Yoy—Foolah! Foolah!" cried the runaway on hearing pronounced the name of his people; and then he continued in a strain of the same language, accompanied by much gesticulation.

"I wish I knew his lingo," said the hunter. "I know he's a Foolah. It is some reason why I should take an interest in him; and may be, if only for that, I might—"

The speaker paused, as if he had been talking to himself; and then continued the soliloquy only in thought. After a pause he resumed speech.

"Crambo! very little would tempt me not to restore him to his master."

"And must you?"

"I must. We Maroons are bound by a treaty to deliver up all runaways we may take; and if we fail to do so—that is, when it is known, but these villains of old Jessuron know I have him—"

"You will receive a bounty, you say?"

"Yes. They will try to deprive me of that; but it isn't the bounty would tempt me in this case. There is something about this young fellow—My word, he is like her!—ay, as if he were her brother."

This last speech was delivered in soliloquy.

"Like her! Like whom?" demanded Herbert with a puzzled look.

"Your pardon," replied the hunter. "I was struck with a resemblance between this poor fellow and one whom I know; but, Master Vaughan," he continued, as if wishing to change the subject, "you have not said how you came to be all night in the woods? You were hunting yesterday and lost your way?"

"True, I lost my way, but not exactly while hunting."

"Perhaps that is all the sort of breakfast you have had?" and the Maroon pointed to some pieces of the palm cabbage that still lay on the turf.

"I have both supped and breakfasted upon it," replied Herbert. "I had climbed the tree for water, when the boar came up to break his fast upon what remained of it."

The Maroon smiled at this explanation of some circumstances by which even he had been mystified.

"Well," said he, "if you are not anxious to return at once to Mount Welcome, and will give me five minutes' time, I think I can provide you something better than raw cabbage."

As he said this, the hunter raised his curved horn to his lips and blew a long, tremulous blast.

"That should procure us company and something to eat, master," said he, allowing the horn to drop back to its place.

"Hark!" he continued, the instant after, "there are some of my fellows. I thought they could not be far off."

As he spoke, the sound of a horn was heard reverberating through the woods, and then another, and another, until nearly a dozen could be distinguished, yet all in different directions. They were evidently answers to the signal he had sounded.

"So, Master Vaughan," he resumed, with an air expressive of triumph, though in a restrained and modest way, "you see these vultures would not have had it all their own way? My hawks were too near for that. Not the less am I beholden to you, Master Vaughan. I did not think it worth while to call my people. I knew the poltroons would not venture beyond a little swaggering talk. See! they come!"

"Who?"

"The Maroons!"

Herbert heard a rustling among the bushes on the opposite side of the glade; and at the same time, about a dozen armed men emerged from the underwood, and advanced rapidly toward the *ceiba*.

The young English gentleman gazed upon the advancing troop with keen curiosity. There were about a dozen of them, all black men, or nearly all, only one or two of them showing any admixture of color. There was not a dwarfish or deformed figure in the party. On the contrary, every man of them possessed a tall stalwart form, strong muscular limbs, a skin shining with health, and eyes sparkling with a vigorous brilliance that betokened an innate sense of freedom and independence.

Their erect, upright carriage, and free, forward step confirmed the belief, which Herbert had already formed, that these black men were not bondsmen. There was nothing of the slave

either in their looks or gestures. But for the color of their skins, he would never have thought of associating such men with the idea of slavery. Armed as they were with long knives and guns, some of them with stout spears, they could not be slaves. Besides, their equipments told that they were hunters, and warriors, if need be. All of them had horns, with pouches suspended over their shoulders; and each was provided with a netted calabash for water, like that of the yellow hunter, already described.

A few carried an equipment altogether different, consisting of a small pannier of withe-work, or palm-fibre neatly woven. It rested upon the back, where it was held in its place by a band of palm-sinnet, crossing the breast, and another brought over the forehead, which thus sustained a portion of the weight. This pannier was the *cutacoo*, the depository of their provisions, and of such articles as were required in their wild forest rambles.

With regard to their costume, that was bizarre, though not unpicturesque. No two were dressed alike, though there was a certain idiosyncrasy in their attire, which proclaimed them all of one following. The *toqued* "bandanna" was the most common head-dress, a few having palm-leaf hats. Only some of them had a shirt with sleeves; others wanted a complete pair of trousers; and one or two were naked from the waist upward, and from the thighs downward—the white cotton loin-cloth being the unique and only garment! All of them had their feet and ankles covered; as the stony and thorny paths they were accustomed to tread rendered necessary. The *chaussure* was the same with all; and appeared to be a tight-fitting jack-boot, of some species of raw hide, without seam or stitching of any kind; the reddish bristles standing thinly over its surface, proclaimed the character of the material. It was the skin of the wild hog, the hind leg of a boar, drawn upon the foot while fresh and warm, as it dries tightening over the instep and ankle like an elastic stocking. A little trimming with the knife is all that is necessary for this ready-made moccasin; and once on, it is never taken off till the wearing of the sole renders necessary a refit. Drawing on his boots, therefore, is no part of the diurnal duties of a Jamaica hog-hunter.

"This white gentleman has not eaten breakfast," said Cubina to his followers as they came up. "Well, Quaco! what have you got in your cutacoo?"

The individual thus appealed to was a jet-black negro of large dimensions, with a grave yet quizzical cast of countenance. He appeared to be a sort of lieutenant.

"Well, worthy capten," answered he, saluting the yellow hunter with a somewhat awkward grace; "I believe there's enough, one thing with another—that be, if the gen'lman has got a good appetite, and 's not too nice about what he eats."

"A fire, and be quick!" commanded Cubina.

At the word given a tinder was struck, dry leaves and branches quickly collected, and a sparkling, crackling fire soon blazed upon the ground. Over this was erected a crane, resting horizontally on two forked sticks, which soon carried a brace of iron pots suspended in the blaze.

A strong fire of dried fagots soon brought the pot to a furious boil; and the lieutenant Quaco—who appeared also to act as *chef de cuisine*—after repeatedly testing the contents, at length declared that the pepper-pot was ready for serving up.

Dishes, bowls, cups, and platters made their appearance, all being shells of the calabash, of different shapes; and as soon as Herbert and the captain were helped to the choicest portions of the savory stew, the remainder was distributed among the men; who, seating themselves in groups over the ground, proceeded to discuss the well-known viand with an avidity that showed that it was also their breakfast.

The pepper-pot was not the sole dish of the *dejeuner*. Pork steaks, cut from the carcass of the freshly-slain boar, were added; while plantains and "cocoa-fingers," roasted in the ashes, contributed a substitute for bread not to be despisably spoken of.

The second pot boiling over the fire contained coffee; which, quaffed from the calabashes, tasted as fine as if snipped out of cups of the purest Sevres porcelain.

In this "al-fresco" feast the poor captive was not forgotten, but was supplied among the rest, the colossal Quaco administering to his wants with an air of quizzical compassion.

Breakfast over, the Maroons gathered up their traps, and prepared to depart from the spot.

Already the wild boar had been butchered, cut up into portable slices, and packed away in the cutacoo.

The wales upon the back of the runaway had been anointed by the hand of Quaco with some balsamic cerate; and by gestures the unfortunate youth was made to understand that he was to accompany the party. Instead of objecting to this, his eyes sparkled with a vivid joy. From the courtesy he had already received at their hands, he could not augur evil.

The Maroons, out of respect to their chief,

whom they appeared to treat with submissive deference, had moved some distance away, leaving Captain Cubina alone with his English guest. The latter, with his gun shouldered, stood ready to depart.

"You are a stranger in the island," said the Maroon, half interrogatively. "I fancy you have not been living long with your uncle?"

"No," answered Herbert. "I never saw my uncle before yesterday afternoon."

"Crambo!" exclaimed the hunter-captain in some surprise; "you have just arrived, then? In that case, Master Vaughan, and that is why I have made bold to ask you—you will scarce be able to find your way back to Mount Welcome. One of my people will go with you?"

"No, thank you. I think I can manage it alone."

Herbert hesitated to say that he was not going to Mount Welcome.

"It is a crooked path urged the Maroon; though straight enough to one who knows it. You need not take the guide so far as the great house; though Mr. Vaughan, I believe, does not object to our people going on his grounds, as some other planters do. You can leave the man when you get within sight of the place. Without a guide, I fear you will not be able to find the path."

"In truth, Captain Cubina," said Herbert, no longer caring what idea his words might communicate to his Maroon acquaintance, "I don't wish to find the path you speak of. I'm not going that way."

"Not to Mount Welcome?"

"No."

"If you are going elsewhere, you will need a guide all the same. This glade is surrounded by a wide stretch of tangled woods. There is no good path leading anywhere."

"You are very kind," answered Herbert, touched by the delicate solicitude of this man with a colored skin. "I wish to reach Montego Bay; and if one of your men would see me on the main road, I should certainly feel under great obligations. As to rewarding him for his trouble, beyond thanking him, I am sorry to say that circumstances just now have placed it out of my power."

"Master Vaughan!" said the Maroon, smiling courteously as he spoke, "were you not a stranger to us and our customs, I should feel offended. You speak as if you expected me to present you with a bill for your breakfast. You seem to forget that, scarce an hour ago, you threw yourself before the muzzle of a pistol to protect the life of a Maroon, a poor outcast mulatto of the mountains! And now—but I forgive you. You know me not—"

"Pardon me, Captain Cubina; I assure you—"

"Say no more! I know your English heart, master—still uncorrupted by vile prejudices of caste and color. Long may it remain so; and whether Captain Cubina may ever see you again, remember! that up yonder in the Blue Mountain, the Maroon pointed as he spoke to the purple outline of a mountain ridge, just visible over the tops of the trees, "up yonder dwells a man—a colored man, it is true, but one whose heart beats with gratitude perhaps as truly as that of the whitest; and should you ever feel the fancy to honor that man with a visit, under his humble roof you will find both a friend and a welcome."

"Thanks!" cried the young Englishman, stirred to enthusiasm by the free friendship of the yellow hunter. "I may some day avail myself of your hospitable offer. Farewell!"

"Farewell!" responded the Maroon, eagerly grasping the hand which Herbert had held out to him. "Quaco!" he cried, calling to his lieutenant, "conduct this gentleman to the main road that leads to the bay. Farewell, Master Vaughan, and may fortune favor you!"

CHAPTER XVI.

QUACO.

It was not without regret that Herbert parted with this new friend; and long time was he following upon the heels of Quaco, before he ceased to reflect on the circumstances that had led to his making so singular an acquaintance.

Quaco, being one of the taciturn sort, made no attempt to interrupt Herbert's meditations until the two had walked together for more than a mile. Then, however, some matter upon his mind brought the guide to a halt, and the commencement of a conversation.

"Two tracks from here, buckra. We can follow either; but dis to the right am the shortest—the best road, too."

"Why not take it, then?"

"O—a, master; there may be reasons."

"What! for avoiding it?"

"Ya—al!" replied Quaco, in a thoughtful, drawing tone.

"What reasons, friend?"

"Don't you see the roof of a house, just over the tops of them pawpaws?"

"Yes; what of that?"

"That's the baracoon."

"The baracoon?"

"Ya—the penn of de Jew Jess'ron."

"And what if it be?"

"Ah, buckra, what if it be? If we take the

path to the right we must pass the Jew's house, and some of his people are sure to see us. That John Crow's justice in the peace, and we may get into trouble."

"Oh! about the affair of the runaway, you mean? Your captain said he belonged to a Mr. Jessuron."

"As much 'bout the dogs as the man. Captain had a right to claim the runaway as his catch; but these Spanish cusses 'll make a muss 'bout thar dogs. They'll say our captain killed them out o' spite; that they'll sw'ar to; since it's well known we mountaineer men don't like such interlopers here, meddlin' with our business."

"But neither you nor I killed the dogs?"

"Ah, buckra, all the same—you helped—your gun helped kill them. Besides, you hindered the John Crows from pecking the hawk."

"For what I have done I am not afraid to answer before a justice,—be it this Mr. Jessuron, or any other," said the young Englishman, conscious of having acted rightly in the part he had taken in the quarrel.

"Not much justice to be expected from Justice Jess'ron, master. My advice be to keep out of the hands of justice as long 's we can; and that we can only do by taking the road to the left."

"Will it be much out of the way?" asked Herbert; not caring to greatly inconvenience himself for the reasons set forth by his sable guide.

"Nothing to signify," answered Quaco, though not speaking very truthfully; for the path he intended to take was really much longer than the one leading by Jessuron's house.

"In that case," assented Herbert, "take which way you please!"

Without further parley, Quaco strode forward on the path branching to the left—as before, silently followed by him whom he was guiding.

The track they had taken ran entirely through woods—in some places very difficult to traverse on account of the thorny thickets as well as the unevenness of the ground, which caused the path to be constantly ascending or trending rapidly downward. At length, however, they arrived at the summit of a high ridge, and were moving onward amidst groves of pimento, more open than the forest from which they had emerged.

From the top of the ridge Herbert saw a large house shining against the verdant background of the landscape, which he at once recognized as the mansion of Mount Welcome.

They were not going toward the house, but in a diagonal direction, which would bring them out on the avenue near the entrance-gate.

Herbert called out to his guide to make halt. The young man did not like the idea of entering upon the avenue, lest he might encounter some of his uncle's people—a circumstance which he should not wish to have reported at the great house.

He therefore requested Quaco to conduct him by some way lying more to the right, so that he might reach the main road without being seen from Mount Welcome.

The guide yielded compliance, though not without a little grumbling reluctance—as he turned off, muttering some words about giving "as wide a berth as possible to the ole Jew penn."

He oblied, however, into a new direction; and, after another traverse through the woods, Herbert had the satisfaction of finding himself on the main road leading to Montego Bay.

The young Englishman had no further need of a guide, and Quaco was just on the point of taking leave of him, when at that moment a party of horsemen suddenly made their appearance round a bend in the road. There were six or seven in all, and they were riding forward at a rapid pace, as if bent upon some serious business.

At the first sight of these strangers, Quaco shot like an arrow into the underwood, calling upon the buckra to follow his example.

Herbert, however, disdaining to hide himself, remained standing in the middle of the road.

Seeing his determination, Quaco returned to his side; as he did so, clamorously protesting against the imprudence of his *protege*.

"Don't like their looks," muttered the Maroon, as he glanced apprehensively toward the horsemen. "It might be—by the Great Accompong, it is!—that harpy Ravener, the overseer of Jess'ron. Golly! buckra, we's in for it! No use tryin' to 'scape 'em now."

As Quaco finished speaking, the horsemen rode forward on the ground, one and all halting as they came to the spot where the pedestrians were standing.

"Here's our fellow!" cried the bearded man at their head, whom Herbert easily identified. "Just dropped upon him, like a duc: upon a June bug. Now, Mr. Tharpey, do your duty! We'll hear what this young gentleman's got to say before the justice."

"I arrest you, sir," said the person appealed to as Mr. Tharpey. "I am head constable of the parish—I arrest you in the name of the law."

"On what charge?" demanded Herbert, indignantly.

"Mr. Ravener here will bring the charge. I've got nothing to do with that part of it. You must come before the nearest justice. I reckon the highest justice from here is the Custos Vaughan."

This half-interrogatory of the constable was addressed, not to Herbert, but to his own followers. Though it was spoken in rather an undertone, the young man heard it with sufficient distinctness, and with very little complacency. To be carried back into the presence of his uncle, whom he had so lately defied, and in the character of a felon—to be brought, under such humiliating circumstance, before the eyes of his fair cousin—before the eye-glass of his late fellow-passenger, was a prospect that could not fail to be unpleasant.

It was a sort of relief, therefore, when Ravener—who appeared to use some guiding influence over the constable and his *posse comitatus*—overruled the suggestion that Mr. Vaughan was the nearest magistrate, and claimed that honor for Jacob Jessuron, Esq., of the Happy Valley.

After some discussion between the parties upon this most legal point, the overseer's opinion was adopted, and it was determined that the case should be carried before Justice Jessuron.

Both Herbert and his guide were then formally arrested in the name of the king, and marched off in custody—not without some very vociferous protestations on the part of Quaco, with a long string of threats that he would some day make both constable and overseer pay for this outrage on the person of a free Maroon.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SUDDEN CHANGE.

JESSURON, Esquire, held court in the veranda of his dingy dwelling-house, where we have already seen him assisting at a different spectacle.

He was now seated, with a small table before him, covered with a piece of green baize, and carrying a gold snuff-box, an inkstand, pen, and some sheets of paper.

A book or two lay upon the table, one of which, by the lettering upon the cover, proclaimed its title and character—*The Jamaica Justice*. It was bound in black leather—a color sufficiently emblematic of the chief subject on which it treated, for more than four-fifths of the laws and regulations it contained related to creatures with black skins.

The justice was in full costume, as the occasion required—that is, he wore his best blue body-coat with gilt buttons, his drab small-clothes and top-boots. The brown beaver had been laid aside, as the sanctity of justice requires even the judge's head to be uncovered, but the white cotton skull-cap still remained upon his cranium, justice in Jamaica not being so rigorous as to exact its removal.

Herbert had been brought up in front of the table, his captor, the constable, and one or two of the *posse*, standing behind him. On the right side appeared Ravener, backed by two Spanish *cavadores*, the last mentioned worthies no longer—as had formerly been their constant custom—attended by their canine companions.

Quaco had been left in the yard below, unguarded, since there was, in reality, no charge against him.

There was one other witness to this magisterial trial—the daughter of the justice himself. Yes, the fair Judith was present, as on all important occasions, but this time not conspicuously so. On the contrary she was seated in a window that opened on the veranda, her beautiful face half concealed behind the netted fringe-work of the curtains. The position enabled her to observe what was passing, without formally exposing her own person to view.

Her face was not altogether hidden, and her white shining forehead and dark lustrous eyes, gleaming through the gauzy muslin that veiled them, only appeared more piquantly attractive.

The young Englishman, though little disposed at that moment to the contemplation of aught beyond his own unpleasant position, could not help observing the beautiful face directly opposite to where he stood.

Some time had been occupied by the overseer in telling his story, to substantiate the charge he had made. That done, the prisoner was put upon his defense.

"Young man!" said the justice, "you have heard what this witness alleges against you. What hash you to say in your defense? And first tell ush what's your name?"

"Herbert Vaughan."

"Herbert Vochan?" repeated the justice. "Might you be any kinshman of Mishter Vochan of Mount Welcome?"

"His nephew," was the laconic reply.

"Ah! hish nephew! Bless me! ish that true?" This announcement, as testified by his speech, produced a sudden commotion in the mind of the Jew justice. From some little that was known of his secret hostility toward his neighbor of Mount Welcome—Ravener knew more than a little—it might have been expected that the discovery of the relationship of the prisoner would have put him in high glee. To be sitting in judgment upon the near kinsman of the Cu-

tos—accused of a serious crime, too—was a proud position for Jacob Jessuron, who could remember many a slight he had received from the haughty lord of Mount Welcome.

Certainly the manner of the justice on learning who was before him seemed to indicate that such were his reflections. He rubbed his skinny hands together, helped himself from his gold snuff box, gleefully smiled from behind his glasses, which were once more shifted upon the sharp ridge of his nose, and then, bending his face forward over the table, he remained for some moments smiling, but silent and thoughtful, as if considering how he should proceed.

After a time he raised his eyes and freshly scrutinized the prisoner, who had already returned an affirmative answer to his last query.

"Blesh my soul! I never knew that Mishter Vochan had a nephew! You are from England, young man! Hash your uncle any more English nephews?"

"Not that I am aware of," replied Herbert, frankly. "I believe I am his only relative of that kind—in England, at least."

The proviso in his reply betrayed a significant fact—that the young man was not very well acquainted with the family affairs of his colonial kinsman.

The astute justice did not fail to notice this deficiency in the nephew's knowledge.

"How long hash you been in Shamaica?" asked he, as if endeavoring to arrive at an explanation of some point that was puzzling him.

"A night and part of two days; in all, about twenty-four hours," replied Herbert, with scrupulous exactness.

"Blesh my soul!" again exclaimed the justice; "only twenty-four hours! It's a wonder you're not at your uncle's house! You hash been there?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Herbert, carelessly.

"You come to shlay at Mount Welcome, I suppose?"

Herbert made no reply to this interrogatory.

"You shleep there lash night? Excuse me, young man, for ashking the question, but ash a magistrate—"

"You are perfectly welcome to the answer, your worship," said Herbert, laying a satirical emphasis on the titular phrase; "I did not sleep there last night."

"Where did you shleep, then?"

"In the woods," answered Herbert.

"Mosheh!" exclaimed the Jew-justice, raising his spectacles in surprise. "In the woods, you shay?"

"In the woods," reaffirmed the young man; "under a tree; and a very good bed I found it," he added, jocosely.

"And did your uncle know of this?"

"I suppose my uncle knew nothing about it, and as little did he care," replied Herbert, with a reckless indifference as to what answer he gave.

The little emphasis on the last words, with the tone in which they were delivered, did not escape the observation of Jessuron. A suspicion had arisen in his mind that there was something amiss in the relationship between the young man and his uncle; to the comprehension of which the answer of the former, aided by a knowledge of the character and affairs of the latter, was gradually giving him a clew. A secret joy sparkled in his sunken eyes, as he listened to the last answer given.

All at once he discontinued the direct examination of the prisoner; and, signing to Ravener and the constable to come near, he became engaged with these two worthies in a whispering conversation.

What passed between the trio, the young Englishman could not tell; nor indeed any one else who chanced to be present. The result, however, was to Herbert as pleasant as unexpected.

When Jessuron again returned to address him, a complete change appeared to have taken place in his manner; and, instead of the frowning justice, Herbert now saw before him a man who appeared more in the character of a friendly protector—bland, smiling, almost obsequious.

"Mashter Vochan," said he, rising from his magisterial seat, and extending his hand to the prisoner, "you will excuse the rough treatment you hash had from these people. It ish a great crime in this country, helping a runaway shlave to eschape; but as you hash josh landed, and cannot be ekspected to know our shtatutes, the law deals marshfully with a first offense. Besides, in this instance, the runaway, who ish one of my own shlaves, did not eschape. He ish in the hands of the Maroons, and will soon be brought in. The punishment I inflict upon you—and I shall insist upon its being carried out—ish, that you eats your dinner with me, and I think that ish punishment enough. Mishter Ravener," added he, calling to his overseer, and at the same time pointing to Quaco, "take that good fellow and see that he ish cared for. Now, Mashter Vochan, please to step inside, and allow me to intoshuce you to my daughter Shoodith."

It would have been contrary to all human nature had Herbert Vaughan not felt gratified at the pleasant turn which this disagreeable

affair had taken; and perhaps this gratification was enhanced at the prospect of the proposed introduction. Indeed, no man, however cold his nature, could have looked upon those lovely eyes, so long wistfully watching him from the window, without wishing a nearer acquaintance with their owner.

Thus had the chapter of accidents that conducted Herbert Vaughan to the penn of Jacob Jessuron been brought to a very unexpected termination.

But the end was not yet. There was more to come—much more.

Herbert was surprised at the turn things had taken. The only explanation he could think of was, that it was to his uncle's name he was indebted for the honors that were being done to him—a mere neighborly feeling of the penn-keeper for the great sugar-planter.

"They are friends," thought Herbert, "and this kindness to me is the offspring of that friendship."

The reflection did not give him pleasure, but the contrary. He felt himself in an awkward position—the recipient of a hospitality not meant for himself, but rather for one who had injured him, and who, although his own relative, he now regarded as his enemy.

Influenced by these considerations, he resolved to throw off the mask with which circumstances had momentarily invested him, and declare the true position in which he stood to his haughty relative.

It was not until the conclusion of the dinner, after the daughter of his host had retired smilingly from the table, that the young Englishman unburdened himself. Then—perhaps a little prompted by the wine—he made a full confession of the disagreeable circumstances existing between himself and the master of Mount Welcome.

Was it the wine, somewhat freely pressed upon him, that hindered him from perceiving the displeasure which his communication had produced upon his hearer? Was there any show of displeasure?

If there was, Herbert did not perceive it.

On the contrary, had the young man been closely observant, he might have noticed an effect of altogether an opposite character. Behind the green goggles he might have seen those deep, dark Israeli eyes sparkling with joy at the revelation he had made.

"I'm exceedingly sorry, young Mashter Vochan," said the Jew, after his surprise at Herbert's revelations had apparently subsided; "exceedingly sorry I ish, to hear that you and your uncle are not on good terms. Ah! well, we must hope for the besht; and ash I am one of Mishter Vochan's humble friends, possibly I might do somethin' to reconshile your little quarrel. Doosh you not intend going back to Mount Welcome?"

"Never! After what has passed, never!"

"Ach! yoush must not be too revengeful. Mishter Vochan ish a proud man; and I must say he hash behaved badly, very badly; but still he ish your uncle."

"He has not acted as such."

"That ish true—very true—thish fine gentleman you speak of; sbtill, that ish no reason why Mishter Vochan should treat hish own nephew so shabby. Well, well; I am sorry, exceedingly sorry. But, Mashter Herbert," continuing, the penn-keeper, interrogating his guest with evident interest, "what dosh you intend to do? I suppose you hash monish of your own?"

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Jessuron, I have not."

"No monish at all?"

"Not a shilling," affirmed Herbert, with a careless laugh.

"That ish bad. Where dosh you think of going since you shay you will not return to Mount Welcome?"

"Well," said Herbert, still preserving his air of jocularly, "I was making for the port again, when your worthy overseers and his friends intercepted me, luckily, I may say, since, but for their intervention, I should, in all likelihood, have gone without dinner to-day; at all events, I should not have dined so sumptuously."

"A wretched dinner, Mashter Vochan—a miserable dinner to what your uncle could have given you. I'm but a poor humble man compared with the Cushos; but what I hash ish at your service any time."

"Thanks!" said Herbert. "I know not, Mr. Jessuron, how I shall ever repay you for your hospitality. I must not tax it any longer, however. I see, by the sun, it is time I should be making for the bay."

As Herbert spoke, he was rising to take his departure.

"Shtop, shtop!" cried his host, pushing him back into his chair; "not to night, Mashter Vochan, not thish night. I can't promise you ush fine a bed as yoush might get at Mount Welcome, but I think I can give you a better ush you sleep in last night—ha, ha! You must stay with ush thish night; and Shoodith will make you some music. Don't shay a word; I takesh no refusal."

The offer was a tempting one; and, after some further pressure, Herbert acquiesced in it.

He was partly influenced to stay where he was by the poor prospect of a lodging which the Bay afforded him; and, perhaps, a little from a desire to hear the promised music.

The conversation was continued by his host putting some further interrogatories:—How did Herbert intend to employ himself in the Bay? What prospect had he of employment? and in what line?

"I fear not much in any line," replied the young man, answering both questions in one, and in a tone of sarcastic despondence.

"Hash you no profession?"

"Alas, no!" replied Herbert. "It was intended by my father I should have one, but he died before my education was completed; and my college—as is too often the case—has taught me little more than a knowledge of dead languages."

"No ushe—no ushe whatever," rejoined the intelligent Israelite.

"I can draw a landscape," pursued the young man, modestly, "or paint a portrait tolerably well, I believe; my father himself taught me these accomplishments."

"Ah, Mashter Vochan, neither ish of the shlightisht ushe here in Shamaica. If you could paint a house, or a wagon, or a shopkeeper's sign, it would bring you more monish than to make the likenesses of every face in the island. What saysh you to the situation of book-keeper?"

"Unfortunately, I know nothing of accounts. The very useful science of book-keeping I have not been taught."

"Ha! ha! ha!" replied Jessuron, with an encouraging chuckle, "you ish what we in Shamaica call *green*, Mashter Vochan. You must know that a book-keeper here hash no books to keep. He doesh not even put a pen to paper."

"How is that, Mr. Jessuron? I have heard the statement before, though I did not comprehend what was meant by it."

"Then I must explain, Mashter Vochan. There ish a law here which makes all proprietors of shlaves keep a white man on hish estate for every fifty blacksh. A very shilly law it ish, but it ish a law. Theesh white supernumeraries are called book-keepers; though, ash I've told you, they keepsh no books. Now you understand what it meansh."

"Then, what duties do they perform?"

"Oh, that depends on circumstances. Some look after the shlaves, and some do thish and some that. But, egad! now I think of it, Mashter Vochan, I am myshelf in need of a book-keeper. I have joosh bought a new lot of blacksh, and I must not break the law. I am ushed to give my book-keepers fifty poundsh a year, currensby; but if you would be content to accept such a berth, I would make the salary—on account of your uncle—a hundred poundsh a year. You would also be found in everything else. What dosh you shay, Mashter Vochan?"

This unexpected proposal on the part of the penn-keeper caused his guest to hesitate and reflect.

Not long, however. His forlorn, homeless situation presented itself too forcibly to his mind to keep him long in doubt as to what answer he should make.

Suffice it to say that the offer, which to the young Englishman appeared only too generous, was accepted; and from that hour the Happy Valley became his home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DUSKY SWEETHEART.

THE departure of the young Englishman, under the conduct of Quaco, was a signal for the black band to disperse.

At a word from their chief they broke up into knots of two or three individuals each, and went off in different directions, disappearing amid the underwood as silently as they had emerged from it.

Cubina alone remained in the glade, the captured runaway cowering upon a log beside him.

For some minutes the Maroon captain stood resting upon his gun, which one of his followers had brought up, his eyes fixed upon the captive. He appeared to be meditating what course he should pursue in relation to the unfortunate slave, and the shadow upon his countenance told that some thought was troubling him.

The Maroon captain felt himself in a dilemma. His duty was in conflict with his desires. From the first the face of the captive had interested him, and now that he had time to scan it more narrowly, and observe its noble features, the idea of delivering him up to such a cruel master as he whose initials he bore upon his breast became all the more repugnant.

Duty demanded him to do so. It was the law of the land—one of the terms of the treaty by which the Maroons were bound—and disobedience to that law would be sure to certain with punishment stringent and severe.

True, there was a time when a Maroon captain would have held obedience to this law more lightly, but that was before the conquest of Trelawny town—or rather its traitorous betrayal—followed by the basest banishment recorded among men.

That betrayal had brought about a change. The Maroons, who had avoided the forced exile,

and still remained in the mountain fastnesses, though preserving their independence, were no longer a powerful people—only a mere remnant, whose weakness rendered them amenable, not only to the laws of the island, but to the tyranny and caprice of such planter-justices as might choose to persecute them.

Such was the position of Cubina and his little band, who had established themselves in the mountains of Trelawny.

With the Maroon captain, therefore, it was a necessity as well as a duty to deliver up the runaway captive. Failing to do so, he would place his own liberty in peril. He knew this, without the threat which Ravener had fulminated in such positive terms.

His interest also lay in the line of his duty. This also he could understand. The captive was a prize for which he would be entitled to claim a reward—the bounty!

Not for a moment was he detained by this last consideration. The prospect of the reward would have had no weight with him whatever; it would not even have cost him a reflection, but that, just then, and for a very singular purpose, Cubina required money.

This purpose was revealed in a soliloquy that at that moment escaped from his lips.

"*Crambo!*" he muttered, using an exclamation of the Spanish tongue, still found in a corrupted form among the Maroons; "if it wasn't that I have to make up the purchase money of Yola—*Por Dios!* he is as like to Yola as if he was her brother! I warrant he is of the same nation, perhaps of her tribe. Two or three times he has pronounced the word *Foolah*. Besides, his color, his shape, his hair—all are like hers. No doubt of it, he's a Foolah."

The last word was uttered so loud as to reach the ear of the runaway.

"Yah! Foolah, Foolah!" he exclaimed, turning his eyes appealingly upon his captor. "No slave—no slave!" added he, striking his hand upon his breast as he repeated the words.

"Slave! no slave!" echoed the Maroon, with a start of surprise; "that's English enough. They've taught him the ugly word."

"Foolah me—no slave!" again exclaimed the youth, with a similar gesture to that he had already made.

"Something curious in this," muttered the Maroon, musingly. "What can he mean by saying he is no slave—for that is certainly what he is trying to say? Slave he must be, else how did he get here? I've heard that a cargo has been just landed, and that the old Jew got most or all of them. This young fellow must be one of that lot. Very likely he's picked up the word aboard ship. Perhaps he is speaking of what he was in his own country. Ah, poor devil! he'll soon find the difference here."

"*Santos Dios!*" continued the Maroon, after a pause, in which he had been silently regarding the countenance of the newly-arrived African. "It's a shame to make a slave of such as he—a hundred times more like a freeman than his master. Poor fellow! it's a hard row he'll have to hoe. I feel more than half-tempted to risk it, and save him from such a fate."

As this half-determination passed through the mind of the Maroon, a noble and proud expression came over his features.

"If they had not seen him in my possession," he continued to reflect; "but the overseer and those Spanish poltroons know all, and will—Well, let them!—at all events, I shall not take him back till I've seen Yola. No doubt she can talk to him. If he's a Foolah she can. We'll hear what he's got to say, and what this 'no slave' means."

On saying this the speaker turned his eyes upward, and appeared for some moments to scan the sun.

"Good," he exclaimed. "It is near the hour. I may expect her at any moment. Oh! I must have him out of sight, and these dead dogs, too, or my timid pet will be frayed. There's been so much doing about here—blood and fire—she will scarcely know the old trysting-place. Hark you, Foolah! Come this way and squat yourself in here till I call you out again."

To the runaway the gestures of his captor were more intelligible than his words. He understood by them that he was required to conceal himself between the buttresses of the *ceiba*; and, rising from the log, he readily obeyed the requisition.

The Maroon captain seized the tail of one of the dead bloodhounds; and, after trailing the carcass for some distance across the glade, flung it into a covert of bushes.

Returning to the *ceiba*, in a similar manner he removed the other; and then, once more cautioning the runaway to remain silent in his concealment, he awaited the approach of her who had given him assignation.

The lover who is beloved need never fear disappointment. True to her tryst, and punctual to the time, did the expected sweetheart make her appearance within the glade.

The girl spoke first.

"Oh, Cubina! news I have tell."

"Come, my love what news? Ah! you are looking grave, Yola; your news is not very joyful, I fear."

"No, not joyful; bad news."

"Let me hear them, love. Something Cynthy has been saying to you? You shouldn't heed what that girl says."

"No, Cubina, I no care what her me tell. I her know, wicked, bad girl. Not Cynthy say that thing me trouble now. Missa Kate me tell."

"Ah! something Miss Vaughan has told you? I wouldn't look for bad news from her. But what is it, dear Yola? Maybe, after all, it's nothing."

"Ah! yes, Cubina, something. I fear me keep from you long, long time."

"Keep you from me! Surely Miss Vaughan don't object to your meeting me?"

"No, not that. Something I fear me hinder from be—"

"Be what?" inquired the lover, seeing that his sweetheart hesitated to pronounce some word, the thought of which was causing her to blush. Come, dear Yola, don't fear to tell me. You know we're engaged; there should be no secret between us. What were you going to say?"

In a low, murmured voice, and looking lovingly in his eyes as she spoke, the girl pronounced the word "marry."

"Ho, ho!" exclaimed the lover, in a confident tone. "I think nothing can occur to hinder that, at least for a very long time. I have now nearly a hundred pounds laid by, and a lucky capture I've just made this morning will help still further to make up that sum. Surely the Custos will not require more than a hundred pounds; though if you were once mine," continued the speaker, casting a look of smiling fondness upon his sweetheart's face, "all the money in the world wouldn't tempt me to part with you."

"Ah, Cubina!" replied his slave-love, with a sigh, "that the bad news I you bring. Hundred pounds no more enough. Only two days ago, he have him offer twice so much for p. or slave Yola."

"Two hundred pounds offered for you!" exclaimed the Maroon, with a start of surprise, his brow becoming suddenly clouded. "Is that what you mean, Yola?"

"Ah, yes!" answered the slave, repeating her sad sigh.

"And who—who is he?" demanded the lover, in a quick, earnest tone, at the same time that a gleam of jealous thought flashed from his dark eyes, like forked lightning across a clouded sky.

"A white man?" continued he, without waiting for the reply to his first question. "I need not ask that. But tell me, Yola, who is he that's so desirous of becoming your owner. You know, I suppose?"

"Missa Kate me tell all. He Jew—wicked white man! Same who me take from big ship; and me first sell Massa Vaughan."

"Ha!" sharply ejaculated the lover, "that old wretch it is! Wicked white man you may well call him. I know the old villain well. *Crumbo!* what can he want with her?" muttered the Maroon, musingly, but with a troubled mien. "Some vile purpose, to a certainty! Oh, sure!" Then, once more addressing himself to his slave sweetheart:

"You are certain, Yola, the old Jew made this offer?"

"So me say young missa."

"Two hundred pounds! And Mr. Vaughan refused it?"

"Missa Kate no allow Massa Vaughan me sell. She say 'Never!' Ah! young missa! she good for say so! No matter what money he give, she never let wicked white man buy Yola. She say so many time."

"That is well; she means, she would not part with you against your will. But if I offer to buy you, it would be a different thing. Perhaps you might let her know all, after awhile. But I have something to learn first, and I don't wish you to tell her till then. So keep our secret, dear Yola, for a little longer."

"And now," continued the Maroon, changing his tone, and turning toward the *ceiba* as he spoke, "I've got something to show you. Did you ever see a runaway?"

"Runaway!" said the girl; "no, Cubina, never."

"Well, my love, there's one not far off; he that I said I had captured this morning, only a little while ago. And I'll tell you why I've kept him here—because I fancied that he was like yourself, Yola."

"Like me?"

"Yes; and that is why I felt for the poor fellow something like pity, since it is to this cruel old Jew he belongs. From what I can make out, he must be one of your people; and I'm curious to know what account he will give of himself."

"He Foolah, you think?" inquired the African maiden, her eyes sparkling with pleasure at the anticipation of seeing one of her own race.

"Yes, I am as good as sure of that; in fact, he has called himself a Foolah several times, though I can't make out what he says. If he is one of your tribe, you will be able to talk to him. There he is!"

Cubina had by this time conducted his sweetheart round the tree to that side on which the

runaway was concealed between the two spurs.

The young man was still crouching within the angle, close up to the trunk of the *ceiba*. The moment the two figures came in front of him, and his eyes fell upon the face of the girl, he sprang to his feet, uttering a cry of wild joy. Like an echo, Yola repeated the cry; and then, both pronouncing some hurried phrases in an unknown tongue, rushed together, and became folded in a mutual embrace.

Cubina stood transfixed to the spot. Surprise—something more—held him speechless. He could only think:—

"She knows him! Perhaps her lover in her own land."

A keen pang of jealousy accompanied the thought.

Rankling it remained in the breast of the Maroon, till Yola, untwining her arms from the fond embrace, and pointing to him who had received it, pronounced the tranquilizing words: "My brother!"

CHAPTER XIX.

CARDIAC ANALYSIS.

INAPPROPRIATE as Jacob Jessuron's neighbors may have deemed the title of his estate—the Happy Valley—Herbert had no reason to regard it as a misnomer. From the hour in which he entered upon his situation of book-keeper, it was a round of pleasures, rather than duties, that he found himself called upon to fulfill; and his new life, so far from being laboriously spent, was one continued scene, or series of scenes, of positive pastime.

Instead of keeping books, or looking after slaves—or, in short, doing anything that might be deemed useful—most of his time was spent in excursions, that had no other object than recreation or amusement. Drives to the Bay, in which he was accompanied by Jessuron himself, and introduced to his mercantile acquaintances; visits to neighboring pens and plantations with the beautiful Judith, in which he was made acquainted with her circle; fishing parties upon the water, and picnics in the woods; all these were afforded him without stint.

He was furnished with a fine horse to ride, dogs and equipments for the chase—everything, in short, calculated to afford him the life of a gentleman of elegant leisure. A half-year's salary had been advanced to him unasked, thus delicately giving him the means of replenishing his wardrobe and enabling him to appear in proper costume for every occasion.

Certainly, the prospects of the poor steerage-passenger seemed to have undergone a change for the better. Through the generosity of his unexpected patron he was playing a *role* at the Jew's penn unlike that which his fellow voyager was, at that very time, performing at Mount Welcome; and as there was not much difference in the social rank of the respective circles in which they were each revolving, it was by no means improbable that the two might meet again, and upon a more equal footing than formerly.

To do Herbert Vaughan justice, it should be stated that he was more surprised than gratified by the luxurious life he was leading. There was something rather extraordinary in the generous patronage of the Jew—something that puzzled him not a little. How was he to account for such kind hospitality?

Thus for days after Herbert Vaughan had made the Happy Valley his home matters moved on smoothly enough to the superficial observer. Slight incongruities that did occur from time to time were ingeniously explained: and the young Englishman, unsuspecting of any evil design, with the exception of the unwonted hospitality that was being bestowed upon himself, saw nothing extraordinary in the circumstances that surrounded him.

Had he been less the honored guest of his Israelitish host perhaps his perceptions might have been more scrupulous and discriminative. But the Arabs have a proverb, "It is not in human nature to speak ill of the horse that has borne one out of danger;" and human nature in the East is but a counterpart of its homonym in the West. Noble as was the nature of the young Englishman, still it was human; and to have "spoken ill of the bridge that had carried him safely over," and from that desolate shore on which he had late been stranded, would have argued a nature something more than human.

If he entertained any suspicion of his patron's integrity he zealously kept it to himself—not with any idea of surrendering either his independence or self-respect, but to await the development of the somewhat inexplicable courtesy of which he was the recipient.

This courtesy was not confined to his Hebrew host. As Herbert had long been aware, his daughter exercised it in an equal degree, and far more gracefully. Indeed, among other transformations that had been remarked as occurring in the Happy Valley, the spirit of the fair Jewess seemed also to have sustained a remarkable change. Though upon occasions the proud, imperious temper would manifest itself, more generally now was Judith in a sentimental vein—at times approaching to sadness. There were other times when the old spitefulness would

show itself. Then the spiral nostrils would curl with contempt, and the dark Israelitish eyes flash with malignant fire.

Happily, these rather ungraceful exhibitions, like the tornadoes of her native land, were rare, for a certain name—the cause that called them forth—was but rarely pronounced in her hearing. Kate Vaughan was the name.

Herbert Vaughan had passed scarce a week under the roof of the Jew's mansion when its mistress was in love with him, to the ends of her fingers, to the very extreme of jealousy!

As for the object of this fervent passion, the young man was at this time altogether unable to analyze his own feelings.

It is true that the imperious spirit of the Jewess, aided by her endless wiles, had gained a certain ascendancy over him; but not so as to obliterate the image that had recently become impressed upon his heart.

In the short interview which he had had with his cousin Kate, Herbert Vaughan had looked, for the first time in his life, on one whom to look at was to love.

Though sensible that he had no claim upon his cousin beyond that of kinship—though not a word had been spoken by her to show that she felt for him any other kind of regard, Herbert, strange enough, had conceived a hope that some day or other a more endearing relationship might exist between them.

Not for long was he cheered by this sweet expectancy. It was too transitory to stand the test of time. As day succeeded day, rumors reached him of the gay scenes that were transpiring at Mount Welcome. Especially was he informed of the contentedness of his cousin Kate in the society of the new companion which her father had provided for her.

The effect of this information was a gradual but grievous extinction of the slight hope which Herbert had conceived.

The circumstances with which chance had now surrounded him may have rendered these regrets less painful. Though his cousin cared not for him, he had no reason to feel forsaken or forlorn. By his side—and almost constantly by his side—was beauty of no common brilliance, showering smiles upon him of no ordinary attractiveness.

In such a dilemma was the heart of Herbert Vaughan. No wonder he found a difficulty in effecting its analysis!

In a condition somewhat similar to Herbert's was the heart of his cousin; though hers was easier to analyze. It was simply trembling under the influence of a first and virgin love. Two forms had been presented to it in the same hour, both in the blush of youthful manhood—one a distinguished gentleman, the other an humble adventurer.

The former had the additional advantage in priority of introduction; the latter was not even introduced. But the favorite does not always win. The earliest on the course may be the latest in the race; and though the heart of the young creole, on its pure virgin page, had received love's image at first sight, it was not that of him who first presented himself to make the impression.

Nor was she kept in ignorance of outward events. Her maid Yola was the medium by which she was acquainted with them. Through this medium she had heard of Herbert's proximity, of his happiness and prosperity. The news would have given her joy but that she had heard he was too happy. Strange that this should be a cause of bitterness!

As for the distinguished Smythje, he was not always in one mind. He, too, was troubled with an alternation of hopes and fears. The former, however, generally predominated, and, for the most part, he felt in his spirit the proud confidence of a conqueror. Often, with Thomas as his audience, might Smythje be heard exultingly repeating the dispatch of Cæsar—"Veni, vidi, vici."

CHAPTER XX.

THE SMYTHJE BALL.

As a climax to the round of *fetes* got up for the express amusement of Mr. Smythje, another was inaugurated—a complimentary ball—Mr. Smythje the recipient of the compliment.

No doubt, Mr. Vaughan would have looked forward to the Smythje ball with pleasant anticipation, as likely to afford him a social triumph, but for the fact that he knew his nephew would be there.

In Mount Welcome the name of Herbert Vaughan was no longer heard. Even Kate—whether it was that she had grown more sage, for she had been chided more than once for introducing it into the conversation, or whether she had ceased to think of him—even she never pronounced his name.

For all that, Mr. Vaughan was still vexed with some lingering suspicion that in that direction lurked danger; and this determined him to prevent, as far as possible, any interview between his daughter and nephew.

He had taken his daughter to task upon this subject; and, using the full stretch of parental authority, compelled her to a solemn promise, that she was not again to speak to her cousin, nor even acknowledge his presence!

It was a hard promise for the poor girl to make. Perhaps it would have been still harder, had she known Herbert's disposition toward her.

The night of the Smythje ball came round in due course. The grand ball-room of the Bay was decorated as became the occasion. Flags, festoons, and devices hung around the walls; and over the doorway a large transparency, supported by the loyal emblems of the Union Jack and banner of St. George, and surmounted by the colonial colors, proclaimed in letters of eighteen inches diameter:

"WELCOME TO SMYTHJE!"

The hour arrived; the band shortly after; close followed by strings of carriages of every kind current in the island, containing scores, ay, hundreds of dancers. Twenty miles was nothing to go to a Jamaica ball.

The band struck up, and the dancing began.

It need scarce be said who was Smythje's first partner—Kate Vaughan, of course. The Custos had taken care of that.

The partner of Judith Jessuron was Herbert Vaughan.

From the gossip of a crowded ball-room many a secret may be learnt. In those late hours, when the supper champagne has untied the tongue, and dancers begin to fancy each other deaf, he who silently threads his way or stands still among the crowd may catch many a sentence not intended to be overheard, and often least of all by himself. Many an involuntary eavesdropper has fallen into this catastrophe. At least two instances occurred at the Smythje ball; and the two individuals in whom, perhaps, we are most interested—Herbert and Kate Vaughan.

Herbert was standing alone in the crowd. Two young planters were near him, engaged in conversation. They had mixed their liquor, and therefore talked loud.

"When is it to come off?" inquired the least knowing of the planters, from him who was imparting the information.

"No time fixed yet," was the reply; "at least, none has been mentioned. Soon, I suppose."

"There will be a grand spread upon the occasion—breakfast, dinner, supper, and ball, no doubt?"

"Sure to be all that. The Custos is not the man to let the ceremony pass without all the *celat*."

"Honeymoon tour afterwards?"

"Of course. He takes her to London. I believe they are to reside there. Mr. Smythje don't much relish our colonial life; he misses the opera. A pity; since it'll make one beautiful woman less in the island!"

Almost at that same moment Kate, too, was listening to a dialogue painfully analogous. Smythje could not dance all the night with her. Too many claimed the honor of his partnership, and for a set or two she had been forsaken by him—left under the guardianship of the watchful Custos.

"Who can he be?" inquired one of two gentle gossips within earshot of Kate.

"A young Englishman, I have heard, a relative of Vaughan's of Mount Welcome, though, for some reason, not acknowledged by the Custos."

"That bold girl appears willing enough to acknowledge him. Who is she?"

"A Miss Jessuron. She is the daughter of the old Jew penn-keeper, who used to deal largely in blacks."

"Faugh! she is behaving as if—"

"True enough!" asserted the other; "but, as they are engaged, that, I take it, is nobody's business but their own. He's a stranger in the island, and don't know much about certain people's position, I suppose. A pity! He seems a nice sort of a young fellow; but as he makes his bed, so let him lie. Ha! ha! If report speaks true of Miss Judith Jessuron, he'll find no bed of roses there. Ha! ha! ha!"

What causes merriment to one may make another miserable. This was true of the words last spoken. From the speaker and her companion they elicited a laugh—from Kate Vaughan they drew a sigh, deep and sad.

She left the ball with a bleeding heart.

"Lost! lost forever!" murmured she, as she laid her cheek upon a sleepless pillow.

"Won!" triumphantly exclaimed Judith Jessuron, flinging her majestic form on a couch.

"Herbert Vaughan is mine!"

"Lost! lost forever!" soliloquized Herbert, as he closed the door of his solitary sleeping-room.

"Won!" cried the victorious Smythje, entering his elegant bed-chamber, and, in the fervor of his enthusiasm, dropping his metropolitan *patois*. "Kate Vaughan is mine!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DUPPY'S HOLE.

On the flank of the "Mountain" that frowned toward the Happy Valley, and not far from the Jumbé Rock a spring gushed forth. So copious was it as to merit the name of fountain. In its descent down the slope it was joined by others, and soon became a torrent, leaping from ledge

to ledge, and foaming as it followed its onward course.

About half-way between the summit and base of the mountain a deep longitudinal hollow lay in its track, into which the stream was precipitated, in a clear, curving cascade.

This singular hollow resembled the crater of an extinct volcano, in the circumstance that on all sides it was surrounded by a precipice facing inward, and rising two hundred feet sheer from the level below. It was not of circular shape, however, as craters generally are, but of the form of a ship, the stream falling in over the poop, and afterward escaping through a narrow cleft at the bow.

Preserving the simile of a ship, it may be stated that the channel ran directly fore and aft, bisecting the bottom of the valley, an area of several acres, into two equal parts; but in consequence of an obstruction at its exit, the stream formed a lagoon, or dam, flooding the whole of the fore-deck, while the main and quarter-decks were covered with a growth of indigenous timber-trees, of appearance primeval.

The water, on leaving the lagoon, made its escape below, through a gorge black and narrow, bounded on each side by the same beetling cliffs that surrounded the valley. At the lower end of this gorge was a second waterfall, where the stream again pitched over a precipice of several hundred feet in height; and thence traversing the slope of the mountain, ended in becoming a tributary of the Montego River.

The upper cascade precipitated itself upon a bed of grim black boulders; through the midst of which the froth-crested water seethed swiftly onward to the lagoon below.

Above these boulders hung continuously a cloud of white vapor, like steam ascending out of some gigantic caldron.

When the sun was upon that side of the mountain, an iris might be seen shining amid the fleece-like vapor. But rare was the eye that beheld this beautiful phenomenon: for the Duppy's Hole—in negro parlance, the appellation of the place—shared the reputation of the Jumbé Rock; and few were the negroes who would have ventured to approach, even to the edge of this cavernous abyss; fewer those who would have dared to descend into it.

Indeed, something more than superstitious terror might have hindered the execution of this last project; since a descent into the Duppy's Hole appeared an impossibility. Down the beetling cliffs that encompassed it, there was neither path or pass—not a ledge on which the foot might have rested with safety. Only at one point—and that where the precipice rose over the lagoon—might a descent have been made; by means of some stunted trees that, rooting in the clefts of the rock, formed a straggling screen up the face of the cliff. At this point an agile individual might possibly have scrambled down; but the damned water—dark and deep—would have hindered him from reaching the quarter-deck of this ship-shaped ravine, unless by swimming; and this, the suck of the current toward the gorge below would have rendered a most perilous performance.

It was evident that some one had tempted this peril; for on scrutinizing the straggling trees upon the cliff, a sort of stairway could be distinguished, the outstanding stems serving as steps, with the parasitical creepers connecting them together.

Moreover, at certain times a tiny string of smoke might have been seen ascending out of the Duppy's Hole; which, after curling diffusely over the tops of the tall trees, would dissolve itself and become invisible. Only one standing upon the cliff above, and parting the foliage that screened it to its very brink, could have seen this smoke; and, if only superficially observed, it might easily have been mistaken for a stray waif of the fog that floated above the waterfall near which it rose. Closely scrutinized, however, its blue color and soft filmy haze rendered it recognizable as the smoke of a wood fire, and one that must have been made by human hands.

Any day might it have been seen, and three times a day—at morning, noon, and evening—as if the fire had been kindled for the purposes of cooking the three regular meals of breakfast, dinner, and supper.

The diurnal appearance of this smoke proved the presence of a human being within the Duppy's Hole. One, at least, disregarding the superstitious terror attached to the place, had made it his home.

By exploring the valley, other evidences of human presence might have been found. Under the branches of a large tree, standing by the edge of the lagoon, and from which the silvery *tillandsia* fell in festoons to the surface of the water, a small canoe of rude construction could be seen, a foot or two of its stem protruding from the moss.

A piece of twisted wither, attaching it to the tree, told that it had not drifted there by accident, but was moored by some one who meant to return to it.

Close under the cliff and near where the cascade came tumbling down from the rocks, stood a tree that deserves particular mention. It was

a *ceiba* of enormous dimensions, with a buttressed trunk, that covered a surface of more than fifty feet in diameter. Its vast bole, rising nearly to the brow of the cliff, extended horizontally over an area on which five hundred men could have conveniently encamped; while the profuse growth of Spanish moss clustering upon its branches, rather than its own sparse foliage, would have shaded them from the sun, completely shutting out the view overhead.

Not from any of these circumstances was the tree distinguished from others of its kind frequently met with in the mountain forests of Jamaica. What rendered it distinct from those around was, that between two of the great spurs extending outward from its trunk, an object appeared which indicated the presence of man.

This object was a hut constructed in the most simple fashion, having for its side walls the plate-like buttresses already mentioned, while in front a stockade of bamboo stems completed the inclosure.

In the center of the stockade a narrow space had been left open for the entrance, which could be closed, when occasion required, by a door of split bamboos that hung lightly upon its hinges of wither.

The sun was just going down to his bed in the blue Caribbean, and tinting with a carmine-colored light the glistening surface of the Jumbé Rock, when a human figure was seen ascending the mountain path that led to that noted summit.

Notwithstanding the gloom of the indigenous forest—every moment becoming more obscure under the fast-deepening twilight—it could be easily seen that the figure was that of a woman; while the buff complexion of her face and naked throat, of her gloveless hands, and shoeless and stockingless feet and ankles, proclaimed her a man of color—a mulatta.

Her costume was in keeping with her caste. A frock of cotton print of flaunting pattern, half open at the breast; a toque of Madras kerchief of gaudy hues—these were all she wore, excepting the chemise of scarcely white calico, whose embroidered border showed through the opening of her dress.

Though it was evident that her errand was not one of ordinary business, there was nothing about her to betray its exact purpose. A basket of palm wickerwork, suspended over her wrist, appeared to be filled with provisions: the half-closed lid permitting to be seen inside a congeries of yams, plantains, tomatoes, and capsi-cums; while the legs of a guinea-fowl protruded from the opening.

This might have argued a certain purpose—an errand to market; but the unusual hour, the direction taken, and, above all, the air and bearing of the mulatta, as she strode up the mountain path, forbade the supposition that she was going to a market. The Jumbé Rock was not a likely place to find sale for a basket of provisions.

After all, she was not bound thither. On arriving within sight of the summit, she paused upon the path; and, after looking around for a minute or two, as if making a reconnaissance, she faced to the left, and advanced diagonally across the flank of the mountain.

Her turning aside from the Jumbé Rock could not have been from fear: for the direction she was now following would carry her to a place equally dreaded by the superstitious—the Duppy's Hole.

That she was proceeding to this place was evident. There was no distinct path leading thither, but the directness of her course, and the confidence with which she kept it, told that she must have gone over the ground before.

Forcing her way through the tangle of vines and branches, she strode courageously onward, until at length she arrived on the edge of the cliff that hemmed in the cavernous hollow.

The point where she reached it was just above the gorge, the place where the stairway led down to the lagoon.

From her actions it was evident that the way was known to her, and that she meditated a descent into the bottom of the valley.

That she knew she could accomplish this feat of herself, and expected some one to come to her assistance, was also evident, from her proceeding to make a signal as soon as she arrived upon the edge of the cliff.

Drawing from the bottom of her dress a small white kerchief, she spread it open upon the branch of a tree that grew conspicuously over the precipice; and then, resting her head against the trunk, she stood gazing with a fixed and earnest look upon the water below.

In the twilight, now fast darkening down, even the white kerchief might have remained unnoticed. The woman, however, appeared to have no apprehension upon this head. Her gaze was expectant and full of confidence: as if the signal had been a preconcerted one, and she was conscious that the individual for whom it was intended would be on the look-out.

Forewarned or not, she was not disappointed. Scarce five minutes had transpired from the hanging out of the handkerchief, when a canoe was seen shooting out from under the moss-gar-

nished trees that fringed the upper edge of the lagoon, and making for the bottom of the cliff beneath the spot where she stood.

A single individual occupied the canoe; who, even under the somber shadow of the twilight, appeared to be a man of dread aspect.

He was a negro of gigantic size; though that might not have appeared as he sat squatted in the canoe but for the extreme breadth of his shoulders, between which was set a huge head, almost neckless. His back was bent like a bow, presenting an enormous hunch, partly the effect of advanced age, and partly from natural malformation. His attitude in the canoe gave him a double stoop; so that, as he leant forward to the paddle, his face was turned downward, as if he was regarding some object in the bottom of the craft. His long, ape-like arms enabled him to reach over the gunwale without bending much to either side; and only with these did he appear to make any exertion, his body remaining perfectly immobile.

The dress of this individual was at the same time grotesque and savage. The only part of it which belonged to civilized fashion was a pair of white trousers or drawers, of coarse Osnaburg linen, such as are worn by the field hands on a sugar plantation. Their dirty yellowish hue told that they had long been strangers to the laundry; while several crimson-colored blotches upon them proclaimed that their last wetting had been with blood, not water.

A sort of *kaross*, or cloak, made out of the skins of the *utia*, and hung over his shoulders, was the only other garment he wore. This, fastened round his thick, short neck by a piece of leathern thong, covered the whole of his body down to the hams, the Osnaburg drawers continuing the costume thence to his ankles.

His feet were bare. Nor needed they any protection from shoes, the soles being thickly covered with a horn-like callosity, which extended from the ball of the great toe to the broad heel, far protruding backward.

The head-dress was equally *bizarre*. It was a sort of cap, constructed out of the skin of some wild animal; and fitting closely, exhibited, in all its phrenological fullness, the huge negro cranium which it covered. There was no brim; but, in its place, the dried and stuffed skin of the great yellow snake was wreathed around the temples, with the head of the reptile in front, and two sparkling pebbles set in the sockets of its eyes to give it the appearance of life!

The countenance of the negro did not need this terrific adornment to inspire those who beheld it with fear. The sullen glare of his deep-set eye-balls; the broad, gaping nostrils; the teeth, filed to a point, and gleaming, shark-like, behind his purple lips; the red tattooing upon his cheeks and broad breast—the latter exposed by the action of his arms—all combined in making a picture that needed no reptilian addition to render it hideous enough for the most horrid of purposes. It seemed to terrify even the wild denizens of the Duppy's Hole. The heron, cowering in the sedge, flipped up with an affrighted cry; and the flamingo, spreading her scarlet wings, rose screaming over the cliffs, and flew far away.

Even the woman who awaited him—bold as she may have been, and voluntary as her rendezvous appeared to be—could not help shuddering as the canoe drew near; and for a moment she appeared irresolute, as to whether she should trust herself in such uncanny company.

Her resolution, however, stimulated by some strong passion, soon returned; and as the canoe swept in among the bushes at the bottom of the cliff, and she heard the voice of its occupant summoning her to descend, she plucked the signal from the tree, fixed the basket firmly over her arm, and commenced letting herself down through the tangle of branches.

The canoe reappeared upon the open water, returning across the lagoon. The mulatto woman was seated in the stern, the man, as before, plying the paddle, but now exerting all his strength to prevent the light craft from being carried down by the current, that could be heard hissing and groaning through the gorge below.

On getting back under the tree from which he had started, the negro corded the canoe to one of the branches; and then scrambling upon shore, followed by the woman, he walked on toward the temple of Obi—of which he was himself both oracle and priest.

CHAPTER XXII. THE RESURRECTION.

ARRIVED at the cotton-tree hut, the myal-man—for such was the negro—dived at once into the open door, his broad and hunched shoulders scarce clearing the aperture.

In a tone rather of command than request, he directed the woman to enter.

The mulatta appeared to hesitate. Inside the hut was dark as Erebus; though without it was not very different. The shadow of the *ceiba*, with its dense shrouding of moss, interrupted every ray of the moonlight now glistening among the tops of the trees.

The negro noticed her hesitation.

"Come in!" cried he, repeating his command

in the same gruff voice. "You me sabby—what fo' you fear?"

"I'se not afraid, Chakra," replied the woman, though the trembling of her voice contradicted the assertion; "only," she added, still hesitating, "it's so dark in there."

"Well, den—you 'tay outside," said the other, relenting; "you 'tay dar wha you is; a soon 'trike a light."

A fumbling was heard, and then the chink of steel against flint followed by fiery sparks.

A piece of punk was set ablaze, and from this the flame was communicated to a sort of lamp, composed of the *carapace* of a turtle, filled with wild-hog's lard, and having the wick twisted out of the down of the cotton-tree.

"Now you come in Cynthy," resumed the negro, placing the lamp upon the floor. "Whal you 'till afear! You de dauter ob Juno Vagh'n—you modder no fear ole Chakra. Whugh! she no fear de Debbil!"

Cynthia, thus addressed, might have thought that between the dread of these two personages there was not much to choose: for the Devil himself could hardly have appeared in more hideous guise than the human being who stood before her.

"Oh Chakra!" said she, as she stepped inside the door, and caught sight of the weird-looking garniture of the walls; "woman may well be afraid. Dis am a fearful place!"

"Not so fearful as de Jumbe Rock," was the reply of the myal-man, accompanied by a significant glance, and something between a smile and a grin.

"True," said the mulatta, gradually recovering her self-possession; "true: you hab cause say so, Chakra."

"Dis a fac', Cynthy."

"But tell me, good Chakra," continued the mulatta, giving way to a woman's feeling—curiosity, "how did you ebbet scape from the Jumbe Rock? The folks said it was your skeleton dat was there—chain to de palm-tree!"

"De folk 'peek da troof. My 'keleton it was, jess as dey say."

The woman turned upon the speaker a glance in which astonishment was mingled with fear, the latter predominating.

"Your skeleton?" she muttered, interrogatively.

"Dem same old bones—de 'kull, de ribs, de joints, drum-ticks, an' all. Golly, gal Cynthy! dat ere 'pears 'stonish you. Wha fo'? Nuffin in dat. You sabby old Chakra! You know he myal-man! Doan care who know now—so long dey b'lieve um dead. Wha for myal man ef he no bring de dead to life 'gain? Be shoo Chakra no die hisself, so long he knows how bring dead body to de life. Ole Chakra know all dat. Dey no kill him, nebber! Neider de white folk nor de brack folk. Dey may shoot 'im wid gun; dey may hang 'im by de neck; dey may cut off 'im head; he come to life 'gain, like de blue lizard and de glass snake. Dey did try kill 'im, you know. Dey 'tarv' him till he die ob hunger and thuss. De John Crow pick out him eyes, and tear de flesh from de old nigga's body; leab nuffin but de bare bones! Hal Chakra 'lib yet; he hab new bones, new flesh! Golly! you him see? he 'trong, he fat as ebber he wa'! Hal hal ha!"

And as the hideous negro uttered his exulting laugh, he threw up his arms and turned his eyes toward his own person, as if appealing to it for proof of the resurrection he professed to have accomplished!

The woman looked as if petrified by the recital; every word of which she appeared implicitly to believe. She was too much terrified to speak, and remained silent, apparently cowering under the influence of a supernatural awe.

The myal-man perceived the advantage he had gained; and seeing that the curiosity of his listener was satisfied—for she had not the slightest desire to hear more about that matter—he adroitly changed the subject to one of a more natural character.

"You've brought de basket ob wittle, Cynthy?"

"Yes, Chakra—there."

"Golly! um's bery good—guinea-ben an' plenty ob vegetable fo' de pepperpot. Anything fo' drink, gal? Haben't forgot daat, a hope! De drink am da mose partickla ob all."

"I have not forgotten it, Chakra. There's a bottle of rum. You'll find it in the bottom of the basket. I had a deal trouble steal it."

"Who you 'teal 'im from?"

"Why, master; who else? He have grown berry partickler of late: carries all de keys himself; and won't let us colored folk go near de storeroom, as if we're all 'teevin' cats!"

"Nebba mind—nebba you mind, Cynthy—may be Chakra watch him by'm-by. Wa, now!" added he, drawing the bottle of rum out of the basket, and holding it up to the light. "De buckra preacher he say dat 'tolen water am sweet. A 'pose dat 'tolen rum folla de same excepshun. A see ef um do."

So saying, the negro drew out the stopper, raised the bottle to his lips, and buried the neck up to the swell between his capacious jaws.

A series of "clucks" proclaimed the passage of the liquor over his palate, and not until he had swallowed half a pint of the fiery fluid,

did he withdraw the neck of the bottle from between his teeth.

"Whugh!" he exclaimed, with an aspirate that resembled the snort of a startled hog. "Whugh!" he repeated, stroking his abdomen with his huge paw. "De buckra preacher may talk 'bout him 'tolen water, but gib me de 'tolen rum. You good gal, Cynthy—you berry good gal, fo' fetch ole Chakra dis nice basket o' wittle. He sometimes berry hungry—he need um all."

"I promise to bring more, whenebber I can get away from the Buff."

"Das right, my picaninny! An' now, gal," continued he, changing his tone, and regarding the mulatta with a look of interrogation, "wha' fo' you want see me dis night? You hab some puppos partickla? Dat so—eh, gal?"

The mulatta stood hesitating. There are certain secrets which woman avows with reluctance—often with repugnance. Her love is one; and of this she cares to make confession only to him who has the right to hear it. Hence Cynthia's silent and hesitating attitude.

"Wha' fo' you no 'peak?" asked the grim confessor. "Shoo' you no hab fear ob ole Chakra! You no need fo' tell 'im—he know you secret a'ready—you lub Cubina, de cap'n ob Maroon! Dat troof, eh?"

"It is true, Chakra. I shall conceal nothing from you."

"Better not, 'cause you can't 'ceal nuffin from ole Chakra. He know ebbery ting—little bird tell um. Wa now, wha' nex'? You tink Cubina no lub you?"

"Ah! I am sure of it!" replied the mulatta, her bold countenance relaxing into an anguished expression. "I once thought he love me. Now I no think so."

"You tink him lub some odder gal?"

"I am sure of it! Oh! I have reason!"

"Who am dis odder?"

"Yola."

"Yola? Dat ere name sound new to me. Wher d's she 'long to?"

"She belongs to Mount Welcome. She Missa Kate's maid."

"Lilly Quasheba I call dat young lady," muttered the myal-man, with a knowing grin. "But dis Yola?" he added; "whar she come from? A nebber hear de name afo'."

"Oh, true, Chakra! I did not think of tellin' you. She was bought from the Jew and fetched home since you—that is, after you left the plantation."

"Arter I lef' de plantation, to die on de Jumbe Rock—ha, ha, ha! Dat's wha' you mean, Cynthy?"

"Yes; she came soon after."

"So do tink Cubina lub her?"

"I do."

"An' she 'ciprocate de feckshun?"

"Ah, surely! How could she help do that?"

The interrogatory betrayed the speaker's belief that the Maroon captain was irresistible.

"Wa, then, wha' you want me do, gal! You want rebbege on Cubina, 'cause he hab 'trayed you? You want me put de death-'pell on him?"

"Oh, no, no!—not that, Chakra, for the love of Heaven!—not that!"

"Den you want de lub-spell?"

"Ah! If he could be made love me 'gain! He did once. That is, I thought he did. Is it possible, good Chakra, to make him love me again?"

"All t'ing possible to old Chakra; an' to prove dat," continued he, with a determined air, "he promise to put de lub-spell on Cubina."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LOVE-SPELL.

THE countenance of the myal man had assumed an air of solemnity that betokened serious determination; and the mulatta felt a presentiment that, in return for his services, something was about to be demanded of her—something more than a payment in meat and drink.

His mysterious behavior as he passed around the hut—now stopping before one of the grotesque objects that adorned the wall, now fumbling among the little bags and baskets, as if in search of some particular charm; his movements made in solemn silence only broken by the melancholy sighing of the cataract without—all this was producing on the mind of the mulatta an unpleasant impression; and, despite her natural courage, sustained as it was by the burning passion that devoured her, she was fast giving way to an indefinable fear.

The priest of Obi, after appearing to have worshiped each *fetich* in turn, at length transferred his devotions to the rum-bottle, perhaps the most potent god in his whole Pantheon. Taking another long-protracted potation, followed by the customary "Whugh!" he restored the bottle to its place; and then, seating himself upon a huge turtle-shell, that formed part of the plenishing of his temple, he commenced giving his devotees her lesson of instructions.

"Fuss, den," said he, "to put de lub-spell on anybody—eider a man or a woman—it am nessary, at de same time, to hab de obeah-spell go 'long wi' it."

"What?" exclaimed his listener, exhibiting a degree of alarm—"the obeah-spell on Cubina, do you mean?"

"No, not on him; dat's not a nessary con-

sarquence. But 'fore Cubina be made lub you, someb'dy else muss be made sick."

"Who?" quickly inquired the mulatta, her mind at the moment reverting to one whom she might have wished to be the invalid.

"Who you tink fo' who you greatest enemy you wish make sick?"

"Yola," answered the woman, in a low, muttered voice, and with only a moment of hesitation.

"Woan do—woman woan do; must be man. An' more dan dat, muss be free man. Nigga slave woan do. Obi god tell me so jess now. Buckra man, too, it muss be. If buckra man hab de obeah-'pell, Cubina be take de lub-spell strong—he lub you hard as a ole mule can kick."

"Oh, if he would!" exclaimed the passionate mulatta, in an ecstasy of delightful expectation; "I shall do anything for that—anything!"

"Den you muss help put de obeah-spell on some ob de white folk. You hab buckra enemy—Chakra hab de same."

"Who?" inquired the woman, reflectively.

"Who! No need tell who Chakra enemy—you enemy, too. Who fool'd you long time 'go' who 'bused you when you wa' young gal? No need tell you dat, Cynthia Vagh'n?"

The mulatta turned her eyes upon the speaker with a significant expression. Some old memory seemed resuscitated by his words, evidently anything but a pleasant one.

"Massa Loftus?" she said, in a half-whisper.

"Sartin sho, Massa Loftus, dat ere buckra you enemy an' mine boaf."

"And you would—"

"'Fat de obeah fo' him," said the negro, finishing the interrogatory, which the other had hesitated to pronounce.

The woman remained without making answer, and as if buried in reflection. The expression upon her features was not one of repentance.

"Muss be him!" continued the tempter, as if to win her more completely to his dark project; "no odder do so well. Obi god say so—muss be de planter ob Moun' Welc'm."

"If Cubina will but love me, I care not who," rejoined the mulatta, with an air of reckless determination.

"Nuff sed," resumed the myal-man. "De obeah-spell sha' be set on de proud buckra, Loftus Vagh'n; an' you, Cynthia, muss 'sist in de workin' ob de charm."

"How can I assist?" inquired the woman, in a voice whose trembling told of a slight irresolution. "How, Chakra?"

"Dat you be tole by'm by, not dis night. De 'pell take time. God Obi be no act all at once, not eben fo' ole Chakra. You come 'gain when I leab de signal fo' you on de trumpet-tree. Till den you keep dark 'bout all dese ting. You one ob de few dat know ole Chakra still 'live. Odders know ob de ole myal-man in de mask, but berry few ebbor see um face, an' nebba suspect who um be. Das all right. You tell who de myal-man am, den—"

"Oh, never Chakra," interrupted his listener, "never!"

"No, berra not. You tell dat, Cynthia, you soon feel de obeah-spell on youself."

"Now, gal," continued the negro, rising from his seat, and motioning the mulatta to do the same, "time fo' you go. I s'pecks one odder soon: no do fo' you to be cotch hya when dat odder come. Take you basket, an' folla me."

So saying, he emptied the basket of its heterogeneous contents, and, handing it to its owner, conducted her out of the hut.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BARGAIN OF OBEAH.

FOR a while after the departure of Cynthia, the temple of Obi remained untenanted, except by its dumb deities: its priest having gone to ferry his neophyte across the lagoon.

In a few minutes he returned alone, having left the mulatta to make her way up the cliff, and homeward to Mount Welcome, where she belonged.

"It was evident that the visit of the mulatta had given him gratification. Even in the dim light of his lamp an expression of domestic joy could be distinguished upon his ferocious face, as he re-entered the hut."

"One dead!" cried he, in an exulting tone; "anoder upon 'im death-bed; and now de third, de las' an' wuss ob 'em all—ha! ha! ha!—be soon feel de vengeance ob Chakra, de myal-man!"

Torice did the wild, maniac-like laugh peal from under the spreading limbs of the ceiba, reverberating with an unearthly echo against the cliffs that hemmed in the Duppy's Hole. It startled the denizens of the dark lagoon; and, like echoes, came ringing up the ravine the scream of the crane, and the piercing cry of the wood ibis.

These sounds had scarce died away, when one of a somewhat different intonation was heard from above. It resembled a shriek; or rather as if some one had whistled through his fingers. Whoever gave utterance to the sound was upon the top of the cliff—just over the hut.

Chakra was not startled. He knew it was a

signal; and that it was given by the great he

"D' de ole Jew!" muttered he, taking the rum-bottle and counselling it under the bed-stead. "You stay der till I wants you 'gain," added he, addressing himself in a confidential tone to this, the object of his greatest adoration. "Now for de nigga-dealer! I se hab news fo' him 'll tickle 'im in de ribs like a ole guana lizard. Not dat Chakra care fo' him. No—only, on dis voyage, boaf am sailin' in de same boat. Da he go 'gain!"

This last exclamation referred to a repetition of the signal heard further down, as if he who was sounding it was advancing along the cliff, toward the gorge at the lower end.

A third call proceeded from that point where the tree stairway scaled the precipice, indicating to Chakra that his visitor was there awaiting him.

Without further delay, the ferryman—grim as Charon himself—returned to his canoe; and once more paddled it across the lagoon.

While Chakra was thus occupied, a man could be seen descending the cliff, through the tangle of climbing plants, who, on the arrival of the canoe at the bottom, was standing, half concealed among the bushes, ready to step into it. The moon shone upon a blue body coat, with bright buttons; upon a brown beaver hat and white skull-cap; upon tarnished top-boots, green goggles, and an enormous umbrella.

Chakra did not need to scan the sharp Israelitish features of the man to ascertain who he was.

Jacob Jessuron was there by appointment; and the myal-man knew both his presence and his purpose.

Not a word of recognition passed between the two, nor sign. Only a caution from Chakra, as the Jew, swinging by a branch, let himself down into the canoe.

"Tep in lightly, Massa Jake, an' doan' push da canoe down 'tream. 'T am jess' as much as I kin do to keep de ole craff out ob de eddy. Ef she get down da, den it 'ud be all up wif boaf o' us."

"Bless my soul! D' you shay so?" rejoined the Jew, glancing toward the gorge, and shivering as he listened to the hoarse growling of the water among the grim rocks. "S'help me, I didn't know it was dangerous. Don't fear, Shakra! I shtep in ash light ash a feather."

So saying, the Jew dropped his umbrella into the bottom of the boat; and then let himself down upon the top of it, with as much gentleness as if he was descending upon a basket of eggs.

The ferryman, seeing his freight safely aboard, paddled back to the mooring-place; and, having secured his craft as before, conducted his visitor up the valley in the direction of the hut.

On entering the temple of Obi, Jessuron—unlike the devotee who had just left it—showed no signs either of surprise or fear at its fantastic ornaments. It was evident he had worshipped there before.

Nor did he evince a special veneration for the shrine; but seating himself familiarly on the bamboo bedstead, uttered as he did so a sonorous "Ach!" which appeared as if intended to express satisfaction.

At the same time he drew from the ample pocket of his coat a shining object, which, when held before the lamp, appeared to be a bottle. The label seen upon its side, with the symbolical bunch of grapes, proved it to be a bottle of cognac.

The exclamation of the myal-man, which the sight of the label had instantaneously elicited, proved that on his side equal satisfaction existed at this mode of initiating an interview.

"Hash you a glass among your belonginsh?" inquired the Jew, looking around the hovel.

"No; dis yeer do?" asked his host, presenting a small calabash with a handle.

"Fush rate. Thish liquor drinksh goot out of anything. I had it from Capten Snowler on 'im last voyage. Jesh taste it, good Shakra, before we begins bishness."

A grunt from the negro announced his willing assent to the proposal.

"Whugh!" he ejaculated, after swallowing the allowance poured out for him into the calabash.

"Ach! goot it ish!" said his guest on quaffing off a like quantity, and then the bottle and gourd being set on one side, the two queer characters entered into the field of free conversation.

In this the Jew took the initiative.

"I bash news for you," said he, "very strange news, if you hasn't already heard it, Shakra? Who dosh you think ish dead?"

"Hal!" exclaimed the myal-man, his eye suddenly lighting up with a gleam of ferocious joy, "he gone dead, am he?"

"Who? I hashen't told you," rejoined the Jew, his features assuming an expression of mock surprise. "But true," he continued, after a pause; "true, you knew he wash sick—you knew Justish Bailey was sick, an' not likely to get over it. Well—he hashen't, poor man!—he's dead and in bish coffin by thish time; he breathed bish lasht yesterday."

A loud and highly-aspirated "Whugh" was

the only answer made by the myal-man. The utterance was not made to convey any intelligible information. On the contrary, by its peculiar intonation, it indicated as much satisfaction as any amount of words could have expressed.

"It ish very shtrange," continued the penn-keeper in the same tone of affected simplicity; "so short a time shince Mishter Ridgely died. Two of the three shustices that sat on your trial, goot Shakra. It looksh ash if Providensh had a hand in it—it dosh!"

"Or de Dibbil, mo' like, maybel!" rejoined Chakra with a significant leer.

"Yesh, Gott or the Devil, one or t'other. Well, Shakra, you hash had your refenge, whichever hash helped you to it. Two of your enemies ish not likely to trouble you again; and ash for the third—"

"Ner he berry long. I se speck," interrupted the negro with a significant grin.

"What you shay?" exclaimed the Jew in an earnest undertone. "Hash you heard anythings? Hash the wench been to see you?"

"All right 'bout her, Massr Jake."

"Goot, she hash been?"

"Jesh leab dis place 'bout quar'r ob an hour 'go."

"And she saysh she will help you to set the obeah spell for him?"

"Hab no fear—she do all dat. Obi had spell oba her, dat make her do more anythin'—ah! awf'ful!—she do all dat. Obi had spell oba her, dat make her do more anythin'—ah! awf'ful!—she do all dat."

"Yesh, yesh," assented the Jew; "I knowsh all dat. And if Obi wash to fail," added he doubtfully, "you hash a drink, goot Shakra—I know you hash a drink ash potent as Obi or any other of your gotsh."

A glance of mutual intelligence passed between the two.

"How long dosh it take your shpell to work?" inquired the penn-keeper after an interval of silence, in which he seemed to be making some calculation.

"Dat," replied the negro, "dat depend alto-gedder on de saccumstance ob how long de spell am wanted to work. Ef 'im wanted, Chakra make 'im in tree day foteh de 'troungest indiwidible cla out o' 'im boots, or in tree hour be do same; but ob coorse dat 'ud be too soon fo' be safe. A spell of tree hours too 'troung. Dat not Obi work—'im look berry like 'pisen."

"Poison—yesh, yesh, it wou'd."

"Tree day too short—tree week am de correct time. Den de spell work 'actly like fever ob de typos. Nobody had s'picion 'bout 'um."

"Three weeks you shay? And no symptoms to make schandal? You're shure that ish sufficient? Remember, Shakra, the Cushtos ish a strong man, strong ash a bull."

"No mar'r 'bout dat. Ef he 'troung as de bull, in dat period ob time he grow weak as de dew-drop calf—I se be boun' he 'taggering Bob long 'fore dat. You say de word, Massr Jake. Obi no like to nigge. Nigga only work man; be no get pay fo' 'im work. Obi 'zemble buckra man. He no work 'less him pay."

"Yesh, yesh; dat ish only shust and fair. Obi should be paid; but shay, good Shakra, how much ish his prishe for a shpell of thish kind?"

"Ef he hab no interest hisself in de workin' ob de 'pell, he want a hunder poun'. When he hab interest, das diff'rent, den he take fifty."

"Fifty poundsh! That ish big monish, good Shakra! In thish case Obi hash an interest, more ash anybody elshe. He hash an enemy, and wants refenge. Ish that not true, good Shakra?"

"Dash da troof. Chakra no go fo' deny 'im. But das jess why Obi 'sent do dat leetle chore fo' fifty poun'. Obi enemy big buckra—'troung as you had jess say—berry difficult fo' 'pell 'im. Any odder myal-man charge de full hunder poun'. Fack, no odder able do da job—no odder but ole Chakra hab dat power."

"Shay no more about the prishe. Fifty poundsh be it. Here's half down." The tempter tossed a purse containing coin into the outstretched palm of the obeah-man. "All I stipulate for ish, that in three weeks you earn the other half; and we shall both be square with the Cushtos Veehan, fer I hash my refenge to shatisfy ash well ash you, Shakra."

"Nuff sed, Massr Jake. 'Fore tree day de 'pell sha' be put on. You back come to de Duppy Hole tree night from dis, you hear how 'im work. Whugh!"

The gourd shell was again brought into requisition; and after a parting "kiss" at the cognac, the "heel-tap" of which remained in the hut, the precious pair emerged into the open air.

The priest of Obi having conducted his fellow-conspirator across the lagoon, returned to his temple, and set himself assiduously to finish what was left of the liquor.

"Whugh!" ejaculated he, in one of the pauses that occurred between two vigorous pulls at the bottle; "ole villum Jew wuss dan Chakra—wuss dan the debbil hisself! Doan' know why he want rebenge. Das nuffin' to me. I want rebenge, an', by de great Accompong! I se a-gwine to hab it! Ef dis gal prob true as de odders did—she muss prob true—in tree week do proud, fat buckra jessis dat condemn me to dat

Jumbe Rock, 'Cussos rodelorum,' as dey call 'im, —won't hab no more flesh on 'im bones dan de 'keleton he t'ink wa' myen. And den, when 'im die—ah! den, after 'im die, de daughter ob dat Quasheba dat twenty year 'go 'corn de lub ob de Coromantee for dat ob de yellow Maroon—maybe her dau'ter, de Lilly Quasheba, sleep in de arms ob Chakra de myal-man! Whugh!

As the minister of Obi gave utterance to this hypothetical threat, a lurid light glared up in his sunken eyes, while his white, shark-like teeth were displayed in an exulting grin, hideous as if the demon himself were smiling over some monstrous menace!

Both cognac and rum-bottle were repeatedly tasted, until the strong frame of the Coromantee gave way to the stronger spirit of the alcohol; and, muttering fearful threats in his gumbo jargon, he at length sunk unconscious on the floor.

There, under the light of the lard lamp—now flickering feebly—he lay like some hideous satyr, whom Bacchus, by an angry blow, had felled prostrate to the earth!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MYSTERIOUS MOTIVE.

THE original motive of the myal-man, in conspiring the death of the Custos Vaughan, would have been strong enough to urge him on without this new instigation. As we have seen, it was one of deadly revenge—simple, and easily understood.

Not so easily understood was that which actuated the Jew. On the contrary, so secretly had he conceived his purposes, that no living man—not even Chakra himself—had been made privy to them.

Up to this moment they may have appeared mysterious; and the time has arrived when it becomes necessary to reveal them. The explanation will show them to be only natural—only in keeping with the character of this crooked and cruel old man.

In the first place, he was well acquainted with the domestic history of the planter—at least, with that portion of it that had transpired subsequent to the latter's coming into possession of Mount Welcome. He knew something of Mr. Vaughan previously—while the latter was manager of the Montagu Castle estate—but it was only after the Custos had become his nearer neighbor, by removal to his present residence, that the Jew's knowledge of him and his private affairs had become intimate and accurate.

The Jew's knowledge of the affairs of Loftus Vaughan extended to many facts unknown to Chakra. One of these was, that his neighbor was blessed with an English brother, who had an only son.

An artist was the English brother, without fortune—almost without name. Many other circumstances relating to him had come to the knowledge of Jessuron; among the rest, that the proud Custos knew little about his poor English relatives, cared less, and scarcely kept up correspondence with them.

In what way could this knowledge interest Jacob Jessuron?—for it did.

Thus, then; it was known to him that Loftus Vaughan had never been married to the quadroon Quasheba.

Kate Vaughan was herself only a *muster*—still wanting one step further from slavery to bring her within the protecting pale of freedom and the enjoyment of its favors.

No will that Loftus Vaughan could decree, no testamentary disposition he might make, could render his daughter his devisee—his heiress.

He might will his property to anybody he pleased; so long as that anybody was a so-called *white*; but, failing to make such testament, his estate of Mount Welcome, with all he possessed besides, must fall to the next of his own kin—in short, to his nephew Herbert.

Was there no remedy for this unspeakable dilemma? No means by which his own daughter might be saved from disinheritance?

There was. A special act might be obtained from the Assembly of the Island.

Loftus Vaughan knew the remedy, and fully intended to adopt it. Every day was he designing to set out for Spanish Town—the capital—to obtain the special act; and every day was the journey put off.

It was the execution of this design that the Jew Jessuron of all things dreaded most, and to prevent it was the object of his visit to the temple of Obi.

Why he dreaded it scarce needs explanation. Should Loftus Vaughan fail in his intent, Herbert Vaughan would be the heir of Mount Welcome; and Herbert's heart was in the keeping of Judith Jessuron.

So fondly believed the Jewess; and, with her assurance of the fact, so also the Jew.

The love-spell woven by Judith had been the first step toward securing the grand inheritance. The second was to be the death-spell, administered by Chakra and his acolyte.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MIDNIGHT WANDERERS.

ONCE more under the *ceiba*, that gigantic trysting tree, stood the Maroon and his mistress. Not, as before, in the bright noonday sun, but

near the mid-hour of the night. The Foolah had dared the dangers of the forest to meet her beloved Cubina.

It was a happy meeting—one of the happiest they had yet enjoyed. Each had brought good news to the other. Cubina, that the brother of his beloved was still safe under his protection, safe and well; Yola, that her young mistress had promised to bestow upon her her freedom.

"Ah!" said Cubina, turning with a proud look toward his sweetheart, "it will be a happy day for all. No, not for all," added he, his face suddenly assuming an expression of sadness; "not for all. There is one, I fear, to whom that day will not bring happiness!"

"I know one, too, Cubina," rejoined the girl, her countenance appearing to reflect the expression that had come over his.

"Oh, you know it, too! Miss Vaughan has told you then, I suppose? I hope she does not boast of it?"

"What she boast of, Cubina?"

"Why, of breaking his heart, as you would do mine, if you were to marry somebody else. Poor young fellow! *Crambo!* If I'm not mistaken, it will be a sad day for him!"

The girl looked up, in puzzled surprise.

"Sad day for him! No, Cubina, he very happy. For her—poor missa—that day be sad."

"*Vagete!* What do you mean, Yola?"

"No more dan I say, Cubina. Missa Kate be very unhappy that day she marry Mr. Mongew; she very so now."

"Can you tell me, Yola, *why* your mistress not like this grand gentleman? Has she told you any reason?"

"Very good reason, Cubina. She another love; that why she Mongew not like."

"Ah! she's in love with somebody else! Have you heard who it is, Yola?"

"Oh, yes; you know him yourself. He missa Kate's cousin; she *him* love."

"Her cousin, Herbert Vaughan?"

"Yes, he name Herber'; he come once—never more come. No matter, she love him first time—she love him ever more! Same I you, Cubina; I you love first time, all the same forever."

"You are sure of all this?" inquired Cubina, in his anxiety to know more, resisting the temptation to reciprocate the endearing speech; "you are sure Miss Vaughan loves her cousin Herbert?"

"Sure, Cubina; missa say so many, many time. She have very much grief for him. She hear he marry one fine, had lady. You know old Jew Jess'ron—his daughter he go marry."

"I have heard so," rejoined Cubina, evidently keeping back from his sweetheart a more definite knowledge of the subject which he himself possessed; "I have heard so. After all," he continued, speaking reflectingly, "it might nothappen—neither of these marriages. There's a proverb, Yola, I've heard among the white folks—'*Many a slip between the cup and the lip.*' I hope it won't be true of you and me; but it might come to pass between young Master Vaughan and Miss Jessuron. Who knows? I know something. *Por dios!* you've given me good news, I think, for somebody. But tell me Yola; have you heard them say when your mistress and this great gentleman are to be married?"

"Missa he say soon. He tell Missa Kate he go great journey. When he come back they get marry; he Missa Kate say so yesterday."

"The Custos going a journey? Have you heard where?"

"Spanish Town, missa tell me—a great big city far away."

"I wonder what that can be for," said Cubina to himself, in a conjectural way. "Well, Yola," he added, after a pause, and speaking more earnestly, "listen to me. As soon as Mr. Vaughan has set out on his journey, you come to me. Perhaps I may have a message for your mistress. Have you heard when he intends to take the road?"

"He go morrow morning."

"Ha! so soon! Well, so much the better for us, and maybe for somebody else. You must meet me here to-morrow night. Tell your mistress it concerns herself. No, don't tell her," he added, correcting himself, "she will let you come without that excuse; besides, it might be that—"

Voices fell upon their ears, and two forms emerging into the moonlight at the lower end of the glade, rapidly advanced in the direction of the *ceiba*.

As if by a common instinct, Cubina and his mistress stopped silently and simultaneously back, retiring together between the buttresses of the tree. There it was dark enough for concealment. Only an eye bent on purposed scrutiny could have detected their presence.

The forms drew near. They were those of a man and a woman. The moonlight shining full upon them, rendered them easy of recognition; but their voices had already declared their identity. Both the intruders were known to both the lovers. They were the Jew Jessuron and the slave Cynthia.

"*Crambo!*" muttered the Maroon, as he saw who they were. "What on earth can they be

doing together, at this time of the night, and here, so far away from any house! *Maldito!* some wicked business, I warrant."

By this time the brace of midnight strollers had got opposite to the tree, and the Jew was delivering himself of a speech, which was plainly heard by those who stood concealed in its shadow.

"Now, Cynthia, goot wench! you hasn't said yet why he hash sent for me! Do you know what it ish for?"

"I don't, Mass Jess'ron, unless it be—"

"Unless what, wench?"

"Somethin' 'bout the news I took him afore I come to you, when I went with his basket of provisions—"

"Ah-ha! you took him some newsh—what newsh, girl?"

"Only that Massr Vagh'n am a goin' away in the mornin'."

"Blesh my soul!" exclaimed the Jew, suddenly stopping in his tracks, and turning toward the mulatta with a look of troubled surprise. "Blesh my soul! You don't shay that, dosh you?"

"Dey say so at the Buff, Massr Jess'ron. Besides, I know m'self he's a goin'. I help pack up him shirts in de trabbelin' valise. He's a goin' a horseback."

"But where, wench, where?" gasped the Jew, in hurried and anxious speech.

"Dey say to 'Panish Town, odder side ob de island."

"Spanish Town! ach!" cried the penn-keeper, in a tone betokening that the words had conveyed some very unwelcome intelligence. "Spanish Town! S'help me, it ish! I knew it! I knew it! ach!"

And, as he repeated the aspirated ejaculation, he struck his umbrella fiercely into the ground, as if to render more emphatic the chagrin that had been communicated by the answer.

Only for a few seconds did he make pause upon the spot.

"Come on!" cried he to his companion, hurriedly moving off from the tree; "come on, wench! If that'sh the case, ash you shay, there'sh no time to be losht—not a minute, s'help me!"

And with this elegant reflection, he ended the brief dialogue, and strode swiftly and silently onward across the glade, the woman following close upon his heels.

"*Demonios!*" muttered the Maroon, as they went off. "That John Crow and his pretty partner are on some ugly errand, I fear! It appears to be the Custos they're conspiring against. *Crambo!* I wonder what they are after with him! What can the old Jew have to do with his going to Spanish Town? I must follow them, and see if I can discover. There appears to be some scheme brewing, that bodes no good to Mr. Vaughan. Where can they be gadding to at this time of night? From the Jew's penn, instead of toward it!"

These interrogative reflections the Maroon made to himself. Then, turning once more to his sweetheart, with a gesture that declared his intention to be gone, he said—

"We must part, Yola, and this instant. love, else I may lose their trail. Adieu! adieu!"

And, with a quick kiss and equally hurried embrace, the lovers separated—Yola returning to Mount Welcome by a path well known to her; while the Maroon glided off on the track taken by the penn-keeper and his female companion.

The Maroon was but a few moments in recovering the "spoor" of the two nocturnal strollers.

At the point where they had gone out of the glade, there was a path that led up the hills in the direction of the Jumbe Rock. It was a mere cattle track, used only very occasionally by bipeds. Being the only path that went that way, and judging, moreover, that neither the Jew nor his follower would be likely to traverse the thicket at random, Cubina concluded that they had gone by this path.

"They appear to be making for the Jumbe Rock," mentally soliloquized Cubina, as they commenced ascending the slope of the mountain. "*Crambo!* That is odd enough! *Valga me Dios!* what's up now? They've stopped!"

The Jew and his companion, about a hundred yards ahead, had suddenly come to a stand. They appeared to be scrutinizing the path.

Cubina, crouching in the shadow of the bushes, stopped likewise; and waited for the others to advance.

They did so after a short interval—hastening on as before; but in a slightly divergent direction.

"Ho, ho!" muttered the Maroon; "not for the Jumbe Rock, but the Duppy's Hole! I remember now. The path forks up yonder. They've taken that which goes to the Hole. Well, it don't help me to comprehend their purpose a bit clearer. *Carrai!* that Duppy's Hole! Didn't some of my fellows tell me they've heard strange noises there lately? Quaco is ready to swear he saw the ghost of the old myal-man, Chakra, standing upon the edge of the cliff. They're going there, as sure as my name's Cubina!"

And with this conjectural reflection the Maroon forsook the shadow under which he had been sheltering, and flitted forward along the path.

Another five hundred yards further on, his conjecture was confirmed. The parties dogged by him had reached the edge of the precipice that frowned down upon the Duppy's Hole, and there halted.

Cubina also made stop—as before, concealing himself within the black shadow of the bushes.

He had scarcely crouched down when his ears were saluted by a shrill whistle—not made by the lips, but proceeding from some instrument, as a reed or common dog-call. It was plainly a signal, sounded either by Cynthia or the Jew; Cubina could not tell which.

After about a minute's time, he saw them once more in motion, and then both appeared to vanish from his view, not wasting into the air, but sinking into the ground, as if a trap-door had admitted them to the interior of the earth.

He saw this without much surprise. He knew they must have gone down the precipice, but how they had performed this feat was something that did surprise him a little.

It was but a short spell of astonishment. In a score of seconds he stood upon the edge of the precipice, at the spot where they had disappeared.

He looked down. He could trace, though dimly, a means of descent among the wattle of boughs and corrugated creepers that clasped the facade of the cliff. Even under the fantastic gleam of the moon he could see that human hands had helped the construction of this natural ladder.

He stayed not to scrutinize it. An object of greater interest challenged his glance. On the disk of the lagoon, in the moonlight, a sheet of silver, like a mirror in its frame of dark mahogany, moved a thing of sharp, elliptical shape—a canoe.

Midships of the craft, a form was crouching. Was it human or demon?

The aspect was demon—the shape scarce human. Long, ape-like arms; a hunched back; teeth gleaming in the moonlight like the incisors of a shark; features everything but human to one who had not seen them before.

Cubina had seen them before. To him, though not familiar, they were known. If not the ghost of Chakra, he saw Chakra himself.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CYNTHIA IN THE WAY.

SATISFIED that he saw Chakra himself, the Maroon placed himself in a position to watch the movements both of the man in the canoe and those who had summoned him across the lagoon.

In another moment the canoe was lost sight of. It had passed under the bushes at the bottom of the cliff, where it was not visible from above.

Voices now ascended, which could be heard, but not distinctly.

Cubina could distinguish three voices taking part in the conversation—Chakra's, the Jew's, and, at longer intervals, the shrill treble of the slave Cynthia.

He bent his ear, and listened with keen attention, in hopes of hearing what they said. He could only catch an occasional word. The roar of the cascade rising along with the voices hindered him from hearing them distinctly; and, notwithstanding his earnest desire to do so, he was unable to make out the matter of the conversation.

Only for a short while was he kept waiting. The *triad* came to a close, followed by a brief interval of silence; at the end of which the canoe once more made its appearance upon the open water of the lagoon.

Two persons only were in it, Chakra and the Jew. Cynthia had stayed by the bottom of the cliff.

To follow the conspirators further was out of the question. His chance is cut off by the interposition of the mulatta. He could only remain on the cliff and await their return.

He was reflecting upon what course to pursue, when a rustling sound reached him from below. It was made by some one moving among the bushes that grew against the face of the precipice.

He caught one of the branches; and, supporting himself by it, craned his neck over the cliff. His eye fell upon the brilliant chequer of a *bandanna*, visible among the leaves. It was the toque upon the head of Cynthia. It was in motion; and he could see that she was ascending by the tree stairway he had already observed.

Without staying to witness the ascent, he turned back into the underwood by the side of the path; and, crouching down, he waited to see what the woman intended doing. Perhaps her part in the performance had been played out—at least, for that night—and she was on her way homeward?

That was what Cubina conjectured, as well as just what he would have wished.

His conjecture proved correct. The mulatta, on mounting to the crest of the cliff, stop-

only for a moment, to adjust upon her arm a basket she had brought up—from the half open lid of which protruded the neck of a bottle. Then, casting her eyes forward, she struck off into the shadowy forest path, and was soon out of sight.

The moment after she had passed him, the Maroon glided silently forward to the edge of the cliff, and commenced descending the stairs. Such feat was nothing to him; and in a few seconds he had reached the edge of the lagoon.

Here he paused to make sure that the canoe had arrived at its destination, and that its late occupants had disembarked from it.

After a moment spent in this *reconnaissance*, looking sharply, and listening with all his ears, he became satisfied that the coast was clear; and, letting himself stealthily into the water, he swam from the opposite shore of the lagoon.

Cubina conjectured, and correctly, that there was a path leading from the anchorage of the canoe; and to find this was his first purpose.

Keeping around the edge of the lagoon, he soon came upon the craft—empty, and anchored under a tree.

The moonlight, entering here from the open water, showed him the *embouchure* of the path, where it entered the underwood; and, without losing a moment's time, he commenced moving along it.

Silently as a cat he stole onward, at intervals pausing to listen; but he could only hear the hissing sound of the upper cascade, to which he was now making approach.

There was a space in front of the waterfall, where the trees stood thinly, and this opening was soon reached.

On arriving at its edge the Maroon again stopped to reconnoiter.

Scarcely a second of time did he need to pause. Light flashed in his eyes through the interstices of what appeared to be a sort of grating. It was the bamboo door of the obeah hut. Voices, too, reverberated through the bars.

Within were the men upon whom it was his purpose to play eavesdropper.

In another instant Cubina was cowering under the cotton-tree, close up to the door-post.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

STRANGE DISCLOSURES.

THE two plotters were palavering loud enough. In that place there was no need, at least, so thought they, for restrained speech; and the listener could have heard every word, but for the hoarse hissing of the cataract. This, at times, hindered him from distinguishing what was said; and only in detached portions could he pick up the thread of the discourse. Enough, however, heard he to cause him astonishment—the greatest of all, that in the Island of Jamaica or upon the earth, existed two such villains as Chakra, the Coromantee, and Jessuron, the Jew!

The Jew, when Cubina first got eyes on him, appeared as if he had just given utterance to some angry speech. His dark weasel-like orbs were sparkling in their sunken sockets, with a fiendish light. The goggles were off, and the eyes could be seen. In his right hand the eternal umbrella was grasped, with a firm clutch, as if held in menace.

Chakra, on the other hand, appeared cowed and pleading. Though almost twice the size, and apparently twice the strength of the old Israelite, he looked at that moment as if in fear of him.

"Gorry, Massr Jake!" said he, in an appealing tone; "how ebber wa' I to know de Cussus wam a gwine so soon! A nebber speered ob dat; an' you nebber tole me you wanted de obeah-spell to work fasser dan war safe. Ef a'd 'a' know'd dat, a kud a fotch de dam Cussus out o' him boots in de shake ob a cat's tail—dat c'u'd a 'didd'!"

"Ach!" exclaimed the Jew, with an air of unmistakable chagrin; "he's going to shlip us. Sh'help me, he will! And now, when I wants more ash ever the shpell upon him. I sh heard something from thish girl Cynthy of a conspiracy against myshelf. Sheesh heard them plotting in the summer-house in the Cushtos's garden."

"Wha' dey plot 'gain' you, Massr Jake? Who am dey dat go plottin'?"

"The Cushtos is one, the other ish that scamp son of Cubina, the Maroon, the young Cubina. You knowsh him?"

"Dat same a know well 'nuf."

"Ah! the proud Cushtos don't know—though he hash his suspicions—that hish wife Quashel a wash the mistress of a Maroon. Ha! ha! ha! And she luffed the mulatto better as ever she luffed Vanities Vochan! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Dat am berry near de troof," observed the negro, with a thoughtful air.

"Little dosh the Cushtos think," continued Jessuron, without heeding the interpolation, "that thish young fellow, whosh a-hel'pin' him to conspire against me, is a sort of a son to hish consheited worship. Ha! ha! ha!"

"You musht put the shpell on him, too," said the Jew; "for heesh the principal in thish plot against me. Even if the Cushtos wash out of the way, thish Captain Cubina will go to some other magistrate to carry out hish design."

There will be plenty to help him. You must shlip him, and soon as you can, Shakra. Ther'sh no time to lose—not a minnit, sh'help me!"

"A do wha a can, Massr Jake; but a mout's well tell ye, that it a'nt so easy to put de spell on a Maroon. It coss me more'n twenty year to put de obeah on him ole fadder, and I'se a been tryin' um on dis young Cubina, fo' some time—ebber since him fadder die. A hate de young un, same a hated de ole un. You knows why a hate boaf."

"I knowsh all that—I knowsh all that."

"Wa, den! a do ma bess. Dat ar m'latta gib me no hope. She soon 'dmiuster de spell ef she hab chance—kase she think um de lub drink. She no hab chance, fo' Cubina he no let her come nigh o' him. Nebba mind: Chakra be find oppotunity some day; 'fore long he put de death-spell on de son ob dat quaderoom."

"Perhaps not so soon!" was the mental rejoinder of him who listened to this confident declaration.

"It'sh less matter about him than the other!" cried the Jew, giving way to a fresh burst of rage. "Sh'help me! the Cushtos is going to shlip out of my fingers—the eshtate—all! Ach!" he ejaculated, as his disappointment came more palpably before him, "you hash played me false, Shakra! I be'liev you've been playin' me false!"

As the Jew gave utterance to this conjectural speech, he started to his feet, taking a tighter hold upon his umbrella, and standing before his *vis-a-vis* in a threatening attitude.

"I tell you," resumed Jessuron, still in threatening speech, "I believe you hash been fooling me, Shakra! You hash some interest of your own—perhaps with this Lilly Quasheba. Ha! never mind. I tell you thish time—I tell you, Shakra, if the shpell does fail—yes, if it fail, and the Cushtos reach the capital, where he ish going, I tell you, Shakra, you may look out for shqualls! You loosh your monish I promised you. Ay, you may loosh your life ash well. I hash only to shay a word, and the Duppy's Hole will be searched by the houndsh of the law. Now will you do your besht to keep the Cushtos from reaching the capital of the Island?"

"A promise, Massr Jake," said the myal man, pleadingly; "by de great Accompong, a do ma bess. Ef de Cussus 'trive 'scape den you do wid ole Chakra whasomediver you hab mind to. 'Liver him up, ef you like! Ha! de Cussus no 'scape. Dis night Cynthy hab take bottle in her basket of de 'troughest kind. It do de bizness in 'bout twenty-fo' hour. Daat am de true death-spell. Whugh!"

"In twenty-four hours? You ish shure, Shakra? you ish shure?"

"Shoo' as a'm now in Duppy Hole, Massr Jake. Doan' you hab no mo' doubt ob ole Chakra. He hab no lub fo' Cussus Va'ghan mo' dan youself. P'raps he lub de Cussus' dau'ter, but dat am very diff'rent sort ob feeshun. Whugh!"

With this speech of fiendish gratification the dialogue ended; and the Jew was seen stepping outside, followed by his confederate.

Both walked away from the spot, Chakra taking the lead, the Maroon closely watching their movements.

On reaching the canoe the conspirators stepped aboard, and the craft was paddled over the lagoon.

Cubina waited for its return; and then, seeing Chakra safe within his hut, he hastened back to the water; and, as before, swimming under the shadow of the rock, he re-ascended the tree stairway, and stood once more on the summit of the cliff.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHERE NEXT?

THE Maroon, after mounting to the summit of the cliff, paused for some moments to reflect upon a course of action.

Having come to the conclusion that his best plan would be to pass the remaining hours of the night under the *ceiba*, he made no further delay by the Duppy's Hole; but turning into the path that led down the slope, he proceeded back toward the glade.

On reaching the rendezvous, his first concern was to kindle a fire. Sleep in a wet shirt was not to be thought of; and every stitch upon his body had been soaked in swimming the lagoon. Otherwise it would not have mattered about a fire. He had nothing to cook upon it; nor was he hungry—having already eaten his supper. Kindled by a woodman's skill, a fire soon blazed up; and the hunter stood erect beside it, turning himself at intervals to dry his garments, still dripping with water.

He was soon smoking all over, like freshly-slaked lime; and, in order to pass the time more pleasantly, he commenced smoking in another sense—the *nicotian*—his pipe and tobacco pouch affording him an opportunity for this indulgence.

Possibly the nicotine may have stimulated his reflective powers; for he had not taken more than a dozen puffs at his pipe, when a sudden and somewhat uneasy movement seemed to say that some new reflection had occurred to him.

Simultaneous with the movement, a muttered soliloquy escaped from his lips.

"Crambo!" exclaimed he, giving utterance to his favorite shibboleth; "say he should come an hour after sunrise, at least another we should be in getting to Mount Welcome. *Por Dios!* it may be too late then! Who knows what time the Custos may fancy to set out?" he added, after a pause; "I did not think of that. How stupid of me not to have asked Yola!"

"Crambo!" he again exclaimed, after another interval passed in silent reflection. "It won't do to leave things to chance, where a man's life is in danger. Who knows what scheme these John Crows have contrived? I couldn't hear the whole of their palaver. If Master Vaughan was only here, we might go to Mount Welcome at once. Whatever quarrel he may have with the uncle, he won't wish to let him be murdered—no likelihood of that. Besides, the young fellow's interference in this matter, if I mistake not, would be likely to make all right between them—I'd like that, both for his sake and hers—ah! hers especially, after what Yola's told me. *Santa Virgen!* wouldn't that be a disappointment to the old dog of a Jew. Never mind; I'll put a spark in his powder before he's many days older! The young Englishman must know all. I'll tell him all; and after that, if he consents to become the son-in-law of Jacob Jessuron, he would deserve a dog's—Bahl! it cannot be! I won't believe it till he tells me so himself; and then—"

"*Por Dios!*" exclaimed he, suddenly interrupting the above train of reflections and passing to another, "it won't do for me to stay here till he comes. Two hours after sunrise, and the Custos might be cold. I'll go down to the Jew's pen at once, and hang about till I see young Vaughan. He'll be stirring about day-break, and that'll save an hour, anyhow. A word with him, and we can soon cross to Mount Welcome."

In obedience to the thought, and without staying to complete the drying of his habiliments, the Maroon stepped out from the glade; and turning into the track—little used—that led toward the Happy Valley, proceeded in that direction.

CHAPTER XXX.

STALKING THE SLEEPER.

CUBINA, on arriving near the precincts of the pen, moved forward with increased caution. He knew that the pen-keeper was accustomed to keep dogs and night-watchers around his inclosure, not only to prevent the cattle and other quadrupeds from straying, but also the black bipeds that filled his barracks.

It was toward the back of the house that he was advancing from the fields—or rather, the side of it, opposite to that on which lay the cattle and slave inclosures.

He had made a short circuit to approach by this side, conjecturing that the others would be more likely to be guarded by the slave and cattle watchers.

On getting within about a hundred yards of the house, Cubina formed the intention not to go any nearer just then. The plan he had traced out was to station himself in some position where he could command a view of the veranda—or as much of it as it was possible to see from one place. There he would remain until day-break.

A slight elevation of the ground, caused by the crumbling ruins of an old wall, furnished the *vidette* station desired; and the Maroon mounting upon this, took his stand to watch the veranda.

He could see the long gallery from end to end on two sides of the dwelling, and he knew that it extended no further.

The Maroon had not been many minutes upon the stand he had taken, when an object in the veranda arrested his attention. As his eye became more accustomed to the shadowy darkness inside, he was able to make out something that resembled a hammock, suspended crosswise, and at some height above the balustrade of the veranda. It was near that end where the moonlight fell upon the floor.

"If it should be the young Englishman himself!" was the conjectural reflection of Cubina.

He scanned the ground with a quick glance. A cocoa-nut palm stood near the wall, whose crest of radiating fronds overlooked the veranda, drooping toward it. Could he but reach this tree unobserved, and climb up to its crown, he might command a close view of him who slept in the swinging couch.

A second attempt to determine him; and, crawling silently forward, he clasped the stem of the cocoa-tree, and "swarmed" upward. The feat was nothing to Cubina, who could climb like a squirrel.

On reaching the summit of the palm, he placed himself in the center of its leafy crown, where he had the veranda directly under his eyes, and so near that he could almost have sprung into it.

The hammock was within ten feet of him, in a downward direction. He could have pitched his tobacco-pipe upon the face of the sleeper. The moonlight was now full upon it. It was the face of Herbert Vaughan.

Cubina recognized it at the first glance; and he was reflecting how he could awake the young Englishman without causing an alarm, when he heard a door turn upon its hinges. The sound came up from the court yard; and on looking in that direction, Cubina saw that the gate leading out to the cattle inclosure was in the act of being opened. Presently a man passed through, entering from the outside; and the gate, by some other person unseen, was closed behind him.

He who had entered walked directly toward the dwelling; and, mounting the steps, made his way into the veranda.

While crossing the court-yard, the moonlight, for a moment, fell upon his face, discovering to Cubina the sinister countenance of the Jew.

"I must have passed him on the path!" reflected the Maroon. "But no, that couldn't be," he added, correcting himself; "I saw his return track in the mud-hole just by. He must have got here before me. Like enough he's been back, and out again on some other dark business. *Crambo!* it's true enough what I've heard say of him; that he hardly ever goes to sleep. Our people have met him in the woods at all hours of the night. I can understand it now that I know the partner he's got up there. *Por Dios!* to think of Chakra being still alive."

The Maroon paused in his reflections; and kept his eye sharply bent upon the shadowy form that, like a spirit of darkness, was silently flitting through the corridor. He was in hopes that the Jew would soon retire to his chamber.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A MISSION FOR THE MAN HUNTERS.

CUBINA for some time preserved his constrained position. He dared not derange it; since the Jew still stayed in the shadowy corridor, sometimes moving about; but more generally standing at the head of the wooden stairway, and looking across the court-yard, toward the gate through which he had come in. It seemed as if he was expecting some one to enter after him.

This conjecture of Cubina's proved correct. The great gate was heard once more turning on its hinges; and, after a word or two spoken by the black porter outside, and answered by a voice of different tone, two men were seen stepping inside the court.

As they passed under the moonlight, Cubina recognized them. Their lithe, supple forms, and swarthy angular lineaments, enabled him to identify the Cuban *cacadores*.

They walked straight up to the stairway, at the bottom of which both stopped.

The Jew, on seeing them inside the gate, had gone back into a room that opened up on the veranda.

He was gone but for an instant; and, coming out again, he returned to the top of the stairway.

One of the Spaniards, stepping up, reached out, and received something from his hand. What it was Cubina could not have told, but for the words of the Jew that accompanied the action.

"There's the flask," said he; "it is the best brandy in Shamaica. And now," he continued, in an accent of earnest appeal, "my good fellow! you hasn't a minute to spare. Remember the big monish you're to gain; and don't let this runaway escape!"

"No fear about that, Senor Don Jacob," replied he who received the flask. "*Carrai!* he'll have long legs to get out of our way—once we're well on the trail of him."

And without further dialogue or delay, the *cacador* descended the stair, rejoined his comrade, and both hurriedly recrossing the court-yard, disappeared through the door by which they had entered.

"An expedition after some poor slave!" muttered Cubina to himself. "I hope the scoundrels won't catch him, anyhow, and I pity him if they do. After all, they're no great hands at the business, spite of their braggadocio."

To the joy of Cubina, the Jew at that moment stepped back into his chamber, the door of which had been left standing open.

"Good!" mentally ejaculated the Maroon. "I hope he'll stay in his hole, now that he's in it. I don't want to see any more of him this night. *Crambo!*"

As the exclamation indicated, the congratulatory speech was cut short by the reappearance of the Jew; not in his blue body-coat, as before, but wrapped in a sort of gabardine, or ample dressing-gown, the skirts of which fell down to his feet. His hat had been removed, though the skull-cap of dirty whitish hue still clung around his temples; for it was never doffed.

To the consternation of Cubina he came out, dragging a chair after him; as if he meant to place it in the veranda and take a seat upon it.

And this was precisely his intention, for, after drawing his chair—a high-backed one—out into the middle of the gallery, he planted it firmly upon the floor, and then dropped down into it.

The moment after Cubina saw sparks, accompanied by a sound that indicated the concussion of flint and steel. The Jew was striking a light.

The smell of burning tobacco was borne

along the gallery, according to Cubina's nostrils upon the summit of the palm. The Jew was smoking a cigar!

Cubina fancied this not only a first cigar, but a second, and, perhaps, a third, had been lighted and smoked; but in the somber shadow in which the smoker sat he could not be certain how many. More than one, however, from the time spent in the operation; for during the full period of an hour a red coal could be seen glowing at the tip of that aquiline proboscis.

Cubina now perceived what troubled him exceedingly—the blue dawn breaking over the tops of the trees! By slightly turning his head he could see the golden gleam of sunlight tinting the summit of the Jumbé Rock!

"*Crambo!* what was to be done?" so ran his reflections.

While considering how he might slip unperceived from the tree, he glanced once more toward the occupant of the chair. The gradually brightening dawn, which had been filling him with apprehension, now favored him. It enabled him to perceive that the Jew was asleep.

With his head thrown back against the sleeping upholstery, Jessuron had at last surrendered to the powerful divinity of dreams. His goggles were off; and Cubina could see that the wrinkled lids were closed over his sunken orbs.

Undoubtedly he was asleep. His whole attitude confirmed it. His legs lay loosely over the front of the chair his arms hung down at the sides; and the blue umbrella rested upon the floor at his feet. This last evidence of somnolency was not even counterbalanced by the stump of a cigar, burnt close, and still sticking between his teeth.

At that moment the occupant of the hammock turned over with a yawn.

"He is going to awake!" thought Cubina; "now is my time."

To the disappointment of the Maroon, the limbs of the sleeper again became relaxed; and he returned to a slumber profound as before.

Cubina drew out his tobacco-pipe. It was the only thing he could think of at the moment; and, guiding his arm with a good aim, he pitched it into the hammock.

It fell upon the breast of the sleeper. It was too light. It awoke him not.

"*Crambo!* he sleeps like an owl at noontide! What can I do to make him feel me? If I throw down my *machete*, I shall lose the weapon; and who knows I may not need it before I'm out of this scrape? Hal one of these cocoa-nuts will do. That, I dare say, will be heavy enough to startle him."

Saying this, the Maroon bent downward; and extending his arm through the fronds beneath him, detached one of the gigantic nuts from the tree.

Poising it for a moment to secure the proper direction, he flung the ponderous fruit upon the breast of Herbert. Fortunately the sides of the hammock hindered it from falling upon the floor, else the concussion might also have awakened the sleeper in the chair.

With a start, the young Englishman awoke, at the same time raising himself upon his elbow. Herbert Vaughan was not one of the exclamatory kind, or he might have cried out. He did not, however; though the sight of the huge brown pericarp lying between his legs caused him considerable surprise.

"Where in the name of Ceres and Pomona, did you rain down from?" muttered he, at the same time turning his eyes up for an answer to his classical interrogatory.

In the gray light he perceived the palm, its tall column rising majestically above him. He knew the tree well, every inch of its outlines; but the dark silhouette on its top—the form of a human being couchant, and crouching—that was strange to him.

The light, however, was now sufficiently strong to enable him to distinguish, not only the form, but the face and features of his *ci-devant* entertainer under the greenwood tree—the Maroon Captain, Cubina.

Before he could say a word to express his astonishment, a gesture, followed by a muttered speech from the Maroon, enjoined him to silence.

"Hush! not a word, Master Vaughan!" spoke the latter, in a half whisper, at the same time he glanced significantly along the corridor. "Slip out of your hammock, get your hat, and follow me into the forest. I have news for you—important! Life and death! Steal out; and, for your life, don't let him see you."

"Who?" inquired Herbert, also speaking in a whisper.

"Look yonder!" said the Maroon, pointing to the sleeper in the chair.

"All right! Well?"

"Meet me in the glade. Come at once—not a minute to be lost! *Those who should be dear to you are in danger!*"

"I shall come," said Herbert, making a motion to extricate himself from the hammock.

"Enough! I must be gone. You will find me under the cotton-tree."

As he said this, the Maroon forsook his seat, so long and irksomely preserved, and, sliding down the slender trunk of the palm, like a

sailor descending the mainstay of his ship, he struck off at a trot, and soon disappeared amid the second growth of the old sugar plantation.

CHAPTER XXXII. THE STIRRUP-CUP.

THE sun was just beginning to re-gild the glittering flanks of the Jumbie Rock, his rays not yet having reached the valley below, when lights streaming through the jalousied windows of Mount Welcome proclaimed that the inmates of the mansion were already astir.

Though a light still burned in the sleeping apartment of the Custos, and also in that of Kate, neither father nor daughter were in their own rooms. Both were in the great hall, seated by a table, on which, even at this early hour, breakfast had been spread.

The costume in which the Custos appeared differed from his every-day wear. It was that of a man about to set forth upon a journey; in short, a traveling costume.

The Custos had found his health giving way. He had lost appetite, and was rapidly losing flesh. A constant and burning thirst had seized upon him, which, from morning to night, he was continually trying to quench.

The plantation doctor was puzzled with the symptoms, and his prescriptions had failed in giving relief. Indeed, so obstinate and death-like was the disease becoming that the sufferer would have given up his intention of going to Spanish Town—at least, to a more fitting time—but for the hope that, in the capital, some experienced physician might be found who would comprehend his malady and cure it.

Indulging in this hope, he was determined to set forth at all hazards.

If Loftus Vaughan was in low spirits, not more joyful seemed his daughter, as she assisted at that early *dejeuner*.

On the contrary, a certain sadness overspread the countenance of the young creole, as if reflected from the spirit of her father.

The purpose of her father's journey may, in part, explain the melancholy that marked the manner of the young creole. She knew that purpose. She had learned it from her father's lips, though only on the evening before.

The intended traveler had no appetite for the solids with which the table was spread, and seemed to care only for drink. After quaffing off several cups of coffee, solely from a desire to quench thirst, and without eating bread or anything else along with it, he rose from the table and prepared to take his departure.

Mr. Trusty entering, announced that the horses and the attendant groom were ready and waiting outside.

The Custos donned his traveling hat, and with the assistance of Kate and her maid Yola put on his sleeved coat, as the air of the early morning was raw and cold.

The "swizzle" bowl stood on the sideboard. While breakfast was being placed on the table Cynthia had been seen refilling the bowl with this delicious drink, which she had mixed in an outside chamber. Some one asked her why she was performing that, her diurnal duty, at so early an hour—especially as master would be gone before the time of swizzle-drinking should arrive—usually during the hotter hours of the day?

"Praps massr like drink ob swizzle 'fore he go," was the explanatory reply vouchsafed by Cynthia.

The girl made a successful conjecture. Just as the Custos was about to step outside for the purpose of descending the stairway, a fit of choking thirst once more came upon him, and he called for drink.

"Massr like glass ob swizzle?" inquired Cynthia, stepping up to his side. "I've mixed for massa some berry good," added she, with impressive earnestness.

"Yes, girl," replied her master. "That's the best thing I can take. Bring me a large goblet of it."

He had scarce time to turn round before the goblet was presented to him, full to the brim. He did not see that the slave's hand trembled as she held it up, nor yet that her eyes were averted, as if to hinder them from beholding some fearful sight.

His thirst prevented him from seeing anything but that which promised to assuage it.

He caught hold of the goblet and gulped down the whole of its contents without once removing it from his lips.

"You've overrated its quality, girl," said he, returning her the glass. "It doesn't seem at all good. There's a bitterish taste about it; but I suppose it's my palate that's out of order, and one shouldn't be particular about the stirrup-cup."

With this melancholy attempt at appearing gay, Loftus Vaughan bade adieu to his daughter, and climbing into the saddle rode off upon his journey.

Ah, Custos Vaughan! That stirrup-cup was the last you were ever destined to drink! In the sparkling "swizzle" was an infusion of the baneful *Savannah flower*. In that deep draught you had introduced into your veins one of the deadliest of the vegetable poisons!

Chakra's prophecy will soon be fulfilled. The death-spell will now quickly do its work. In twenty-four hours you will be a corpse!

CHAPTER XXXIII. THE HORN SIGNAL.

CUBINA, on getting clear of the penn keeper's precincts, lost little time in returning to the glade, and having once more reached the *ceiba*, seated himself on a log to await the arrival of the young Englishman.

For some minutes he remained in this attitude, though every moment becoming more fidgety, as he perceived that time was passing, and no one came. He had not even a pipe to soothe his impatience, for it had been left in the hammock, into which he had cast it from the *cocoa*. Before many minutes had passed, however, a pipe would have been to little purpose in restraining his nervous excitement, for the non-appearance of the young Englishman began to cause him serious uneasiness.

The Maroon at last raised the horn to his lips and blew a long, loud blast, and then another, and another.

There was a response to that signal, but not such as the young Englishman might have been expected to make. Three shrill bugle-blasts, borne back upon the breeze, seemed the echoes of his own.

But the Maroon knew they were not. On hearing them he let the horn drop to his side, and stood in an attitude to listen.

Another—this time a single wind—came from the direction of the former.

"Three and one," muttered the Maroon; "it's Quaco. He needn't have sounded the last, for I could tell his tongue from a thousand. He's on his way back from Savanna-la-Mer, though I didn't expect him to return so soon. So much the better; I may want him."

Shortly after, Quaco came into the glade, carrying a large bundle upon his back, under which he had trudged all the way from Savanna-la-Mer.

The skin of the colossus was covered with a white sweat that appeared to be oozing from every pore of his dark epidermis. This might have been occasioned by his long walk, the last hour of it under a broiling sun, and carrying weight, as he was, for the bag upon his back appeared a fifty-pounder, at least, to say nothing of a large musket balanced upon the top of it.

None of these circumstances, however, would account for that inexplicable expression upon his countenance—the wild rolling of his yellow eyeballs, the quick, hurried step, and uncouth gesticulations by which he was signaling his approach.

Though, as already stated, they had arrested the attention of his superior, the latter, accustomed to a certain reserve in the presence of his followers, pretended not to notice them. As his lieutenant came up he simply said:

"I am glad to have you come, Quaco."

"An' a'm glad, Cappin Cubina, I've foun' ye har. War burryin' home fass as my legs c'u'd carry me, 'spectin' to find ye thar."

"Ha!" said Cubina, "some news, I suppose. Have you met any one in the woods—that young Englishman from the Jew's penn? I'm expecting him here. He appears to have missed the way."

"Ha'n't met no Englishman, cappin. Cussos Vaughan am dat—I se a met him."

"Crambo!" cried Cubina, starting as he uttered the exclamation. "You've met Custos Vaughan? When and where?"

"When—dis mornin'. Where—'bout fo' mile b'yond the crossin' on the Carrion Crow road. That's where I met him."

The emphasis upon the last word struck upon the ear of Cubina. It seemed to imply that Quaco, on his route, had encountered others.

"Anybody else did you meet?" he inquired hurriedly, and with evident anxiety as to the answer.

"Ya as, cappin," drawled out the lieutenant, with a coolness strongly in contrast with his excited manner on entering the glade. But Quaco saw that his superior was waiting for the coming of the young Englishman, and that he need not hurry the communication he was about to make. "Ya-as, I met ole Plute, the head-driver at Moun' Welcome. He was ridin' 'longside the Cussos, by way o' his escort."

"Nobody else?"

"Not jess then," answered Quaco, evidently holding back the most interesting item of news he had to communicate. "Not jess then, Cappin Cubina."

"But afterward? Speak out, Quaco. Did you meet any one going on the same road?"

The command, with the impatient gesture that accompanied it, brought Quaco to a quicker confession than he might have volunteered.

"I met, Cappin Cubina," said he, his cheeks bulging with the importance of the communication he was about to make, while his eyes rolled like 'twin jelly balls' in their sockets; "I met next, not a man, but a ghost!"

"A ghost?" said Cubina, incredulously.

"A duppy, I sw'ar by the great Accompong—same as I saw before—the ghost of old Chakra!"

The Maroon captain again made a start, which his lieutenant attributed to surprise at the announcement he had made.

"Stop, cappin!" said Quaco, interrupting with a gesture that showed he had something more to communicate; "you ha'n't heard all. I met more of 'em."

"More of whom?"

"That same queer sort. But two mile attar I'd passed the place where I see'd the duppy o' the ole myal man, who d'ye think I met nex'?"

"Who?" inquired Cubina, half-guessing at the answer.

"Them debbil's kind: like enough company for the duppy; them Spaniards of de Jew's penn."

"Ah! *maldito!*" cried the Maroon captain, in a voice of alarm, at the same time making a gesture as if a light had suddenly broken upon him. The Spaniards, you say! They, too, after him! Come, Quaco, down with that bundle! throw it in the bush, anywhere! there's not a moment to be lost. I understand the series of encounters you have had upon the road. Luckily, I've brought my gun, and you yours. We may need them both before night. Down with the bundle, and follow me!"

"Stop and take me with you," cried a voice from the edge of the glade; "I have a gun, too."

And at the same moment the young Englishman, with his gun upon his shoulder, was seen emerging from the underwood and making toward the *ceiba*.

Herbert Vaughan, apprised of the peril in which his uncle stood, for the time forgot all else, and only thought of pressing onward to his aid.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SICK TRAVELER.

AFTER passing beyond the precincts of his own plantation, and traversing for some distance a by-road known as the Carrion Crow, Mr. Vaughan at length reached the main highway, which runs between Montego Bay on the north and Savanna-la-Mer on the southern side of the Island.

The day turned out to be one of the hottest, especially after the hour of noon; and the concentrated rays of the sun glaring down upon the white chalky road over which the traveler was compelled to pass, rendered the journey not only disagreeable but irksome.

Added to this, the Custos, not very well on leaving home, had been getting worse every hour.

It was late in the afternoon that the symptoms of his disease became especially alarming; and then he was passing through an uninhabited portion of the country, a wild corner of Westmoreland parish, where not a house was to be met with for miles along the highway.

Beyond this tract, and a few miles further on the road, he would reach the grand sugar estate of Content.

It had been the design of the traveler, before starting out, to make Content the half-way house of his journey, by stopping there for the night. Still desirous of carrying out this design he pushed on, notwithstanding the extreme debility that had seized upon his frame, and which rendered riding upon horseback an exceedingly painful operation.

It was sunset when he came in sight of Content.

The Custos gazed upon the sight with dizzy glance. The sounds fell confusedly on his ear. As the shipwrecked sailor, who sees land without the hope of ever reaching it, so looked Loftus Vaughan upon the valley of Content. For any chance of his reaching it that night, without being carried thither, there was none; no more than if it had been a hundred miles distant, at the extreme end of the island. He could ride no further. He could no longer keep the saddle; and slipping out of it, he tottered into the arms of his attendant!

Close by the road-side, and half-hidden by the trees, appeared a hut, surrounded by a kind of rude inclosure, that had once been the garden or "provision ground" of a negro. Both hut and garden were ruin—the former deserted, the latter overgrown with that luxuriant vegetation which, in tropic soil, a single season suffices to bring forth.

Into this hovel the Custos was conducted, or rather carried, for he was now unable even to walk.

A sort of platform, or *banquette*, of bamboos—the usual couch of the negro cabin—stood in one corner; a fixture seldom or never removed on the abandonment of such a dwelling. Upon this the Custos was laid, with a horse-blanket spread beneath, and his calmet cloak thrown over him.

More drink was administered; and then the attendant, by command of the individual himself, mounted one of the horses, and galloped off to Content.

Loftus Vaughan was alone!

The black groom had galloped off for help, and ere the sound of his horse's hoofs had ceased to reverberate through the unclosed chinks of the cabin, the shadow of a human form, pro-

jected through the open doorway, was flung darkly upon the floor.

The shadow was defined and distinct. The hut faced westward. There were no trees before the door—nothing to intercept the rays of the now sinking sun, that covered the ground with a reddish glare; nothing save that sinister *silhouette*. Only the upper half of a body was seen—a head, shoulders, and arms. In the shadow, the head was of gigantic size; the mouth open, displaying a serrature of formidable teeth; the shoulders surmounted by the hideous hump; the arms long and ape-like! Beyond doubt it was either the shadow of Chakra, or a duplication of his ghost—of late so often seen.

The sick man was too terrified to speak; too horrified to think. It scarce added to his agony when, instead of his shadow, the myal-man himself, in his own proper and hideous aspect, appeared within the doorway, and without pause stepped forward upon the floor!

The scream that escaped from the lips of Loftus Vaughan announced the climax of his horror. On uttering it, he made an effort to rise to his feet, as if with the intention of escaping from the hut; but finally, overpowered by his own feebleness, and partly yielding to a gesture of menace made by the myal-man—and which told him that his retreat was intercepted—he sunk back upon the *banquette* in a paralysis of despair.

"Ha!" shouted Chakra, as he placed himself between the dying man and the door. "No use fo' try 'scape—no use wha'somdever! Ef ye wa' able get 'way from hya, you no go fur. Fore you walk hunder yards you fall down in you track like new-drop calf. No use, you ole fool. Whugh!"

Another shriek was the only reply which the enfeebled man could make.

"Ha, ha, ha!" vociferated Chakra, showing his shark-like teeth in a fiendish laugh. "Ha, ha, ha! Skreek away, Cussus Va'ghan! Skreek till you bu'st your wind-pipe. Chakra tell you it no use. De death-'pell am 'pon you—it am in you—an' jess when dat ar sun hab cease shine upon de floor, you go join you two brodder jus-suses in de oder world, wha' you no fine buckra no better dan brack man. Dey gone afore. Boaf go by de death-'pell. Chakra send you jess the same; only he you keep fo' de lass, 'kase you de grann Cussus, an' he keep him bess victim fo' de lass. De debbil him better like dat way."

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the dying man. It was the last utterance of his life. On giving tongue to it, he had fallen back upon the bamboo bedstead, mechanically drawing the cloak over his face, as if to shut out some horrid sight; and while the myal-man, gloating over him, was endeavoring to procrastinate his pangs, the poison had completed its purpose.

Chakra, extending one of his long arms, raised the fold from off his face; and holding it up, gazed for a moment upon the features of his hated foe, now rigid, blanched, and bloodless.

Then, as if himself becoming frightened at the form and presence of death, the savage miscreant dropped the cover quickly to its place, rose from his stooping position, and stole stealthily from the hut.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TWO SPECULATIVE TRAVELERS.

HAD Chakra, on leaving the hut, only taken the main road back to Montego Bay—and that was the direction in which he intended going—he would have met two strange men. Not so strange but that they were known to him; but strange enough to arrest the attention of an ordinary traveler.

The brace of worthies thus described are already known. They were the man-hunters of Jacob Jessuron, Manuel and Andres—*cacadores de cimmarones* from the island of Cuba.

The sun had already hidden his red disk under the sea horizon, when the man hunters mounted the hill, and approached the hut where Custos Vaughan had been compelled to make halt, and in which he was now lying lifeless.

"Mira, Manuel!" said Andres, as they came within sight of the hovel, and at the same instant saw the horse standing tied to the tree; "un cavallo! saddled, bridled, and with alforjas!"

"A traveler's horse!" rejoined Manuel, "and that very traveler we've been tracking. Yes! it's the horse of the great alcalde of Mount Welcome! Don't you remember when we saw them before us at mid-day, that one of the horses was a bay, and the other a gray? There's the gray, and it was on that very animal the Custos was riding."

"Caval! you're right; I wonder whether they're both inside! It's very odd we don't see the negro's horse!"

"Ha!" rejoined Andres, apparently struck with an idea. "What if he's gone on to the plantation for some purpose? Suppose an accident has happened to the Custos's steed, or, *carrai!* suppose he's himself taken sick!"

"Por Dios! If Blackskin's out of the way, now's our time; for there is more to be feared from that big buck nigger than his master, when it comes to a struggle. If it should prove that the Custos is sick—I hope it is so—he won't be in

a condition to make much use of his weapons; and *carrambo!* we must get hold of them before he knows what we're after!"

Creeping cautiously up to the wall, the *cacadores* peeped through the unclayed chinks of the cabin.

At first the darkness inside hindered them from distinguishing any object in particular. Presently, as their eyes grew more accustomed to the obscurity, they succeeded in making out the bamboo bedstead in the corner, with something that resembled the figure of a man stretched lengthwise upon it.

He appeared to be sound asleep: there was no motion perceptible—not even as much as would indicate that he breathed!

The assassins looked toward one another with a significant glance. The Fates appeared to favor their attempt; and as both on the instant were actuated by the same sanguinary instinct, they leaped simultaneously to their feet, drew their sharp *machetes*, and rushed together through the doorway.

"*Matelo! matelo!*" (kill him!) cried both, in the same voice, each with a view of encouraging the other; and, as they uttered the cruel cry, they buried the blades in the body of the unresisting traveler—stabbing it repeatedly through the cloak.

Convinced that they had finished their bloody work, the murderers were about to rush out again—probably with an eye to the saddle-bags outside, when it occurred to them as strange that the victim of their hired villany should have kept so quiet. In their frenzied excitement, while dealing what they supposed to be his death-blows, they had not stopped to notice anything odd in the behavior of the man whom they were murdering. Now that the deed was done, and they could reflect more coolly, a sudden surprise seized upon them, springing from the circumstance that the wretched man had made not the slightest motion, had neither stirred nor cried out! Perhaps the first stab had gone right through his heart; for it was so intended by Andres, who had given it. But even that does not produce instantaneous death, and the man-hunters knew it. Besides, on the blade of Andres' *machete*, as well as that of his comrade, *there was no blood!*

It was very strange. Could the cloak or under-garments have wiped it off? Partially, they might, but not altogether! Their blades were wet, but not with blood—of that they showed scarce a stain.

"It's a queer thing, comrade," exclaimed Manuel. "I could almost fancy—*Vaya!* Lift the cloak, and let's have a look at him."

The other, stepped closer to the couch, stooped toward, and raised the fold of the camlet, from the face of the murdered man.

As he did so, his hand came in contact with the cold skin, while his glance fell upon the stiffened features of a corpse—upon eyes whose dull, blank film showed that the light had long since forsaken them.

The assassin stayed not for a second look. With a cry of terror, he let go the garment, and rushed toward the door, followed by his equally terrified companion.

In another moment both would have escaped outside, and perhaps have taken the back track, without thinking any more about the saddle-bags; but just as Andres had set foot upon the door-sill, he saw before him something that caused him to pull up, and with a precipitancy that brought his comrade with a violent concussion against his back.

That something which had led to this sudden interruption was the presence of three men, standing in a triangular row, scarce five paces from the door. Each was holding a gun in such position that its dark, hollow tube was visible to the eyes of the assassin—pointing directly upon himself.

The three men were of three distinct colors—white, yellow, and black; all three known to the man-hunter and his companion. They were Herbert Vaughan, Cubina, captain of the Maroons, and Quaco, his lieutenant.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CAPTURE OF THE CACADORES.

THE black, though presumably the lowest in rank, was the first to break speech.

"No, ye don't!" cried he, moving his musket up and down, while still keeping it leveled upon the foremost of the *cacadores*. "No, Mister Jack Spaniard, not a foot do you set outside that door till we see what you've been a-doin' 'ithin there. Steady, now, or thar's an ounce of lead inter yer garlicky inside! Steady!"

"Surrender!" commanded Cubina, in a firm, authoritative voice, and with a threatening gesture, which, though less demonstrative than that of his lieutenant, was equally indicative of determination. "Drop your *machetes*, and yield at once! Resistance will only cost you your lives."

Thus threatened, Andres sulkily let fall his *machete* upon the floor—an action that was instantly imitated by his senior and superior.

"Now, my braves," proceeded the black lieutenant, still holding his huge gun to the

Spaniard's breast; "lest ye mout be wantin' to gife us leg-bail, you muss submit to be trussed a trifle. Down upon yer behinds, both o' ye; and keep that way till I get the cords and skewers ready."

The *cacadores* perfectly understood the order and perceiving that there was no chance for disobedience, squatted down upon the floor, each on the spot where he had been standing.

Quaco now picked up the two *machetes*, placing them beyond the reach of their *ci-devant* owners.

Then, handing his great gun over to the care of Cubina, who with Herbert was left to guard the prisoners, he walked off to a short distance among the trees.

Presently he returned, trailing after him a long creeping plant that resembled a piece of cord, and carrying two short sticks, each about three feet in length.

Quaco, habile in handling cordage of all kinds, more especially the many sorts of supple withes with which the trees of a Jamaica forest are laced together, soon tied the two Spaniards wrist to wrist, and ankle to ankle, as tightly as could have been done by the most accomplished jailer.

A long practice in binding runaway blacks had made Quaco an expert in that department, which, indeed, constitutes part of the professional training of a Maroon.

The captors had already entered within the cabin, now dark as death itself. For some moments they stood upon the floor, their eyes endeavoring to read the gloom around them. Silent they stood—so still that they could hear their own breathing, with that of the two prisoners upon the floor. At length, in the corner, they could dimly make out something like the form of a man lying stretched upon a low bedstead.

Quaco, though not without some trepidation, approached it. Stooping down, he applied his hand to it with cautious touch.

"A man!" muttered he; "eyther asleep or dead."

"Dead!" he ejaculated the instant after, as, in groping about, his fingers chanced to fall upon the chill forehead—"dead and cold!"

Cubina and Herbert, stepping forward and stooping over the corpse, verified the assertion of Quaco.

Whose body was it? It might not be that of Loftus Vaughan! It might be the black attendant, Pluto!

No! it was not a black man. It needed no light to show that. The touch of the hair was sufficient to tell that a white man lay dead upon the couch.

"Catch me one of those *cocuyos!*" said the Maroon captain, speaking to his lieutenant.

Quaco stepped outside the hut. Low down along the verge of the forest were flitting little sparks, that appeared to be a galaxy of stars in motion. These were the *lampyridæ*, or small fire-flies. It was not with these Quaco had to do.

Here and there, at longer intervals, could be seen much larger sparks of a golden-green color. It was the great winged beetle—the *cocuyo*—that emitted this lovely light.

Dothing his old hat-crown, Quaco used it as an insect-net; and after a few strokes, succeeded in capturing a *cocuyo*.

With this he returned into the hut, and, crossing over, held it near the head of the

He did not content himself with the golden-green light which the insect emits from the two eye-like tubercles on its thorax. The forest-craft of Quaco enabled him to produce a brighter and better.

Holding open the elytra with his fingers, and bending back the abdomen with his thumb, he exposed that oval disk of orange light, only seen when the insect is on the wing.

A circle of a yard in diameter was illuminated by the phosphoric glow. In that circle was the face of a dead man, and sufficiently bright was the lamp of the *cocuyo* to enable the spectators to identify the ghastly lineaments as those of the Custos Vaughan.

None of the three started or felt surprise. That had been gradually passing; for before this their presentiment had become almost a conviction.

Quaco simply uttered one of those exclamations that proclaim a climax; Cubina felt chagrined—disappointed in more ways than one; while Herbert gave way to grief, though less than he might have done had his relative more deserved his sorrow.

At that instant the hoof-strokes of horses were heard in front of the hut; and the shadowy forms of two horsemen could be distinguished just outside the doorway.

It was the black groom, who had returned from Content, accompanied by the overseer of the estate.

Shortly after a number of negroes appeared on foot, carrying a stretcher.

Their purpose was to convey the sick man to Content.

Circumstances had occurred to make a change in the character of their duty.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE VIGIL OF LOVE AND THE VIGIL OF JEALOUSY.

YOLA, true to her tryst, set forth to meet her beloved Maroon. The hour of midnight was the time that had been appointed; but in order to secure punctuality, she took her departure from Mount Welcome before that hour with great secrecy.

From whatever motive sprung her cautious behavior, it was not sufficient to prevent her departure from being observed; nor did it enable her to perceive that thing of woman's shape that, like an evil shadow, flitted after her across the fields, and went following her along the forest-path.

On reaching the glade the young girl advanced toward the *ceiba*, and took her stand within its shadow.

Allowing her eyes to drop to the ground at her feet, she stood for some minutes buried in a reverie of reflection, a sweet reverie, as befitted her situation of pleasant expectancy.

She was startled from this abstraction by the behavior of a bird—a scarlet tanager—that rose, fluttering and frightened, out of a small clump of bushes about ten paces from the *ceiba*, and in which it had been reposing.

The bird, uttering a cry of alarm, forsook the shelter and flew off into the forest.

Yola could see nothing that should have caused the creature to make so abrupt a departure from its roosting-place. Some of its natural enemies had frayed the bird? Perhaps a rat, an owl or a serpent? Thus reasoned she; and was so satisfied.

If, instead of contenting herself with this conjecture, she had stepped ten paces forward, and looked into the little copse, she would have seen there something very different from any of the three creatures her fancy had conjured up. She would have seen the form of a woman crouching within the shadow, with features set in suppressed rage, and eyes glowing indignantly upon herself. Easily, too, would she have recognized the face as that of her fellow-slave, Cynthia.

For long hours did the Foolah maid wait for the coming of her beloved Cubina, her ear keenly bent to catch any sound that might announce his approach; her bosom every moment becoming more and more a prey to painful impatience.

Equally long stayed the spy in her place of concealment, equally suffering torture from jealous imaginings.

To both it was a relief when a footstep upon the path, and a rustling of branches, proclaimed the approach of some one toward the spot. It was but a momentary relief, mocking the anticipations of both, thwarting the joy of the one, and the vengeful design of the other.

Instead of the expected lover, a very different personage made his appearance; and almost at the same instant another, coming from the opposite side.

Both at the same time advanced toward the middle of the glade; and without exchanging a word, stopped face to face near the *ceiba*, as if they had met by appointment.

They were out in the open ground, and under the full light of the moon. Both were men, and the faces of both could be distinctly seen.

Yola knew only one of them, and the sight of him hindered her from staying to look upon the other. She merely glanced at a countenance that was fearful, though not more fearful to her than the one she had already recognized, and which had at once determined her to get away from the ground.

Keeping the great trunk between herself and the new comers, and retreating silently under its shadow, she glided back into the underwood of the forest, and was soon far from the presence of the two intruders, who had brought her long and vain vigil to such an unsatisfactory termination.

Cynthia could not have followed her example, even had she been so inclined. The two men had stopped within six paces of the spot in which she lay concealed. On every side of it the ground was clear of cover, with the moon shining full upon it. A cat could not have crept out of the copse without attracting the attention of one or the other.

The two men who had thus interrupted the silent tableau by the *ceiba* tree were Jacob Jesuron and Chakra the Coromantee.

They met near the middle of the glade, just outside the shadow of the great tree, stopping face to face when within a pace or two of each other. Not the slightest salutation was exchanged between the two men, any more than if they had been two tigers who had just come together in the jungle. The secret compact between them precluded the necessity for compliment or palaver. Each understood the other, and not a word was spoken to introduce the dialogue except that which was pertinent to the business between them.

"Well, goot Shakra! you hash news for me?" interrogated the Jew, taking the initiative in the conversation. "You hash been in the direction of Savanna? Ish all right on the road?"

"Whugh!" vociferated the myal-man, throwing out his breast and jerking up his shoulders

with an air of triumphant importance. "All right, eh? Well, not azzackly on de road, but by de side ob daat same, dar lie a corp', w'ich by dis time oughter be as cold as de heart ob a watermillyum, an' tiff as—tiff as—as de 'kelton ob ole Chakra. Ha! ha! ha!"

And the speaker uttered a peal of fierce laughter at the simile he had had so much difficulty in conceiving; but which, when found, recalled the sweet triumph of his vengeance.

"Blesh my soul! Then it ish all over?"

"Daat's all ober—I'se be boun'."

"And the shpell did it? The wench Cynthia thought ash how you had followed the Cushtos."

"Whugh! dat 'ere gal talk too much. She hab her tongue 'topped 'fore long. She muss hab her tongue 'topped, else she gess boaf o' us in trouble. Nebba mind! A make dat all right too—by—m-by. Now, Massr Jake, a wart dat odder twenty-five pound. De job am finish, an' de work am done! Now's de time fo' de pay."

"That ish right, Shakra. I hash the monish here in red gold. There it ish."

As the Jew said this, he passed a bag containing gold into the hands of Chakra.

"You'll find it ish all counted correct. Twenty-five poundsh currenshy. Fifty poundsh altogether, ash agreed. A deal of monish, a deal of monish, s' help me!"

Chakra made no reply to this significant insinuation; but taking the bag, deposited it in the lining of his skin *kaross*, as he did so giving utterance to his favorite ejaculation, "Whugh!" the meaning of which varied according to the accentuation given to it.

"And now, goot Shakra!" continued the Jew; "I hash more work for you. There ish another shpell wanted, for which you shall have another fifty poundsh; but firsh, tell me hash you seen any one to-day on your travels?"

"See'd any one, eh? Well, dat am a quessin, Massr Jake. A see'd a good wheen on my trab-bels; more'n see'd me, I'se be boun'."

"But ash you seen any one ash you know?"

"Sartin a did—de Cussus fo' one, tho', by de golliess! a hardly w'u'd a know'd him, he wur so fur gone—moas to de bone! He am almos' as much a 'kelton as ole Chakra hisself. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Anybody else that you hash a knowledge of?"

"No—nob'dy—neery one as a know anythin' 'bout, 'ceppin' de Cussus' 'tendant. A see'd odder men on de road, but dey wur fur off, and a keep dem fur off as a kud. Oal yes, da wa' one who comed near—mose too near—him I know'd. Dat wa' one ob dem 'ere Trelawney Maroon—Quaco dey call um."

"Only Quaco, you shay? You hash seen nothing of hish capt'in, Cubina, nor of a young white gentlemansh along with him?"

"Neider de one nor de totter ob dem two people. Wha' fo' you ask dat, Massr Jake?"

"I hash a good reason, Shakra. The young fellow I speak of ish a book-keeper of mine. He hash left the pen this very morning. I don't know fur why, or whither he ish gone; but I hash a reason to think he ish in company with Capt'in Cubina. Maybe not, and maybe he'll be back again; but it looksh suspicious. If he'sh gone for goot, the shpell will be all for nothingsh. S'help me, for nothingsh!"

"Daat's a pity! I'm sorry fo' dat, Massr Jake. A hope he no gone."

"Whether or not, I musht go to sleep about it. There ish another shpell that will be more need now ash ever."

"De Obi am ready. Who'd'ye want 'em set fo' nex'?"

"For this rasheal Cubina."

"Ah, dat ere in welkum. De god do him bess to 'pell him."

"He hash trouble for me. It ish not like to come so soon now, ash the Cushtos ish out of the way. But who knowsh how soon? And better ash the shpell should be set at once. So, good Shakra, if you can manish to do for Cubina in as short a time ash you hash done the Cushtos, there ish another fifty pounds ready for you."

"All do ma bess, Massr Jake, to earn you money. All do ma bess—de bess can do no mo'."

"That ish true, goot Shakra! Don't you think this wench, Cynthia, can help you?"

"Not a bit ob help from dat quar'r; not worth a 'traw for 'pelling Cubina. He no let de n'latta come nigh o' 'im fo' no considerashun. He sick ob de sight o' her. Besides, dat gal, she knows too much now. She one ob dese days foteh de white folk to de Duppy Hole. Dat nebba do. No furrer use now. She hab serb her turn, an' muss be got rid ob—muss go 'long wi' de odders—long wi' de Cussus. Da's my way—de only way to keep a woman tongue tied, am to 'top 'um waggin' altogedder. Whugh!"

After uttering the implied threat, the monster stood silent a moment, as if reflecting upon some mode by which he could make away with the life of the mulatta.

"You think, Shakra, you ish likely to find somebody else to assist you?"

"Nebber fear, Massr Jake. Leab dat to ole Chakra; ole Chakra an' ole Obi. Dey do de bizness widout help from any odder."

"Fifty poundsh, then, Shakra. Ach! I'd give twice the monish—yes, s'help me! ten times the monish—if I knew it wash all right with young Vochan. Ach! where ish he gone?"

The expression of bitter chagrin, almost anguish, with which the villainous old Jew, for at least the tenth time on that day, repeated this interrogative formula, told that, of all the matters upon his mind, the absence of his book-keeper was the one uppermost, and deemed by him of most importance.

"Blesh my soul!" continued he, lifting his umbrella high in the air, and continuing to hold it up. "Bless my soul! if he ish gone for goot, I shall have all this trouble for nothing—all the cr-r—inconvenience!"

It was "crime" he was about to have said; but he changed the word—not from any delicacy in the presence of Chakra, but rather to still a shuddering within himself, to which the thought had given rise.

"Nebba mind, Massr Jake," said his confederate, encouragingly; "you hab got rid ob an enemy—same's masseff. Dat am someth'ing, anyhow; an' a promise you soon get shot ob one odder. A go at once 'bout dat berry bizness."

"Yesh! yesh! soon, goot Shakra, soon ash you can! I won't keep yoush any longer. It ish near daylight. I musht go back, and get some shleep. S'help me! I hash not had a wink this night. Ach! I can't shleep so long ash he'sh not found. I musht go home, and see if there ish any newsh of him."

So saying, and turning on his heel, without "good-night," or any other parting salutation, the Jew strode abstractedly off, leaving Chakra where he stood.

"Whugh!" ejaculated the Coromantee, as soon as his confederate was out of hearing; "dar's something heavy on de mind ob dat 'ere ole Jew, someth'ing wuss dan de death ob de Cussus Va'gh'n. Wonder now wha' 'em be all 'bout? 'Bout dis yar book-keeper a knows it am. But wha' 'bout him? A'll find out 'fore a'm many hour older. Daat a'll do. Golliess! A muss go an' git some sleep too. A'm jess like de Jew masseff—ha'n't had ne'er a wink dis night, nor de night afore neider; nor doan expect get de half of a wink morrer night! Dat will be night ob all odder? Morrer night, if all t'ing go well, Chakra he no sleep him 'lone—he sleep no more by hisseff—he hab for him bed-fellow de beauty ob all de Island of Jamaica. He sleep wi' de Lilly—"

Ere the full name of the victim threatened with this horrid fate had passed from his lips, the menace of the myal-man was interrupted.

The interruption was caused by a sound proceeding from the little clump of bushes close to where Chakra stood.

It sounded exactly as if some one had sneezed, for it was that in reality. Cynthia had sneezed.

She had not done so intentionally; far from it. After what she heard, it was not likely she should have uttered any sound to proclaim her presence.

At that instant she would have given all she possessed in the world, all she ever hoped to possess, even the love of Cubina, to have been miles from the spot, within the safe kitchen of Mount Welcome; anywhere but where she then was.

Long before the conversation between the Jew and Chakra had come to a close, she had made up her mind never to see the myal man again; never willingly. Now an encounter appeared inevitable; he must have heard the sneeze!

The wretched woman reasoned aright; he had heard it.

A fierce "whugh" was the ejaculation it called forth in response; and then the myal-man, turning suddenly in the direction whence it appeared to have proceeded, stood for a short time silent, and listening.

"By golly!" said he, speaking aloud; "dat 'ere soun' berry like a 'neeze! Some ob dem 'ere trees ha' been a-takin' snuff. A'd jess like know wha' sort ob varmint made dat obstrapolus noise. It wa'n't a bush—dat's sartin'. Nor yet wa' it a bird. What den? It wa'n't 't all onlike de 'neeze ob a nigga wench! But what w'u'd a wench be a-doin' in tha! Da's what puzzles me. Lookkee hya!" added he, raising his voice and addressing himself to whoever or whatever might have produced the noise; "les's hear dat ag'in, whosomebber you be! Take anodder pince eb de snuff—louder dis time, so a can tell whedder you am a man or whedder you be femmyvine."

He waited for a while, to see if his speech would elicit a response; but none came. Within the copse all remained silent, as if no living thing was sheltered under its somber shadows.

"You won't 'neeze ag'in," continued he, seeing there was no reply; "den, by golly, a make you, ef you am what a 'speck you is! some'dy hid in dar to lissen. No snake can't a 'neeze dat way, no' yeta lizzart. You muss be eyder man, woman, or chile; an' ef you be, an' hab heard wha's been 'say, by de great Accompong! you life no be worth—Ha! ha!"

As he entered upon this last paragraph of his apostrophe he had commenced moving toward the copse, which was only six paces from the starting-point. Before the speech was com-

pleted he had passed in among the bushes; and bending them over with his long, ape-like arms, was scrutinizing the ground underneath.

The exclamation was called forth by his perceiving the form of a woman in a crouching attitude within the shadow.

In another moment he had seized the woman by the shoulder, and with a quick wrench jerked her into an erect position.

"Cynthy!" he exclaimed, as the light fell upon the countenance of the mulatta.

"Yes, Chakra!" cried the woman, screaming ere she spoke; "it's me, it's me!"

"Whugh! Wha' you do hya! Youb been lissenin'. Wha' fo' you lissen!"

"Oh, Chakra! I did not intend it. I came here—"

"How long you been hya! Tell dat quick!"

"Oh, Chakra—I came—"

"You hya 'fore we came in' de glade. Needn't ax dat. You no k'ud git hya atterwa'd. You heer all been said! You mus' hab heer it."

"Oh, Chakra, I couldn't help it. I would have gone—"

"Den you nebba hear nodder word more. Won't do let you go now. You come hya; you stay hya. You nebba go out ob dis 'pot. Whugh!"

And giving to the monosyllable an aspirate of fierceness that caused it to sound more like utterance of a wild beast than a human being, the monster threw out his long, dark arms, and rushed toward his intended victim.

In another instant his long muscular fingers were clutched round the throat of the mulatta, clamping it with the tightness and tenacity of an iron garrote.

The wretched creature could make no resistance against such a formidable and ferocious antagonist. She tried to speak; she could not even scream.

"Coak—r—a, de—ar, Chak—r—al" came forth in a prolonged thoracic utterance, and this was the last articulation of her life.

After that there was a gurgling in her throat—the death-rattle, as the fingers relaxed their long-continued clutch—and the body, with a sudden sound, fell back among the bushes.

"You lie da!" said the murderer, on seeing that his horrid work was complete. "Dar you tell no tale. Now for de Duppy Hole; an' a good long sleep to 'fresh me fo' de work of de morrer night. Whugh!"

And turning away from the image of death he had just finished fashioning, the fearful Coromantee pulled the skirts of his skin mantle around him, and strode out of the glade, with as much composure as if meditating upon some abstruse chapter in the ethics of Obi.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CHAKRA TRIMMING HIS LAMP.

DAY was dawning when the tiger Chakra returned to his lair in the Duppy's Hole. With him the night was day, and the dawn of the morn the twilight of evening.

His sleep was far from being silent. From his broad, compressed nostrils came a sonorous snoring, causing the cartilage to heave outward, accompanied by a gurgling emission through his throat that resembled the breathing of a hippopotamus.

Thus slumbered Chakra throughout the live-long day, dreaming of many crimes committed, or, perhaps, only of that, the sweetest crime of all, which was yet in abeyance.

It was near night when he awoke. The sun had gone down; at least, he was no longer visible from the bottom of the Duppy's Hole; though some red rays, tinting the tops of the trees upon the summit of the cliff, told that the orb of the day was still above the horizon.

His first thought was about something to eat, and his eyes fell upon the skillet, standing where he had left it, near the middle of the floor. It still contained a quantity of the miscellaneous stew—enough for a meal.

The kindling of the fire, the warming up of the pepper pot, and its subsequent consumption, were three operations that did not take Chakra any very great amount of time. They were all over just as the darkness of night descended over the earth.

"Now fo' get ready de signal," soliloquized he, moving about over the floor of his hut, and looking into crannies and corners, as if in search of some object.

As he said this, he drew from under the bamboo bedstead a gourd shell, of nearly egg-shape, but of the dimensions of a large melon. It had a long, tapering shank—part of the fruit itself, where the pericarp narrowed toward its peduncle—and through this a string had been passed, by which the gourd could be suspended upon a peg.

Holding it by the handle, he raised the shell to the light of his lard lamp, already kindled, and stood for some time silently inspecting it.

The gourd was not perfect—that is, it was no longer a mere empty shell, but a manufactured article, containing within a most singular apparatus. On one side appeared a hole, several inches in diameter, and cut in a shape nearly pyramidal, the base being above the thick end

of the oval, and the apex, somewhat blunt, or truncated, extending toward the shank.

Up to the level of the opening the shell was filled with lard, in the middle of which appeared a wick of silk cotton staple; and behind this were two bits of broken looking-glass, set slanting to each other.

The whole apparatus bore some resemblance to a reflecting-lamp; and that was in reality the purpose for which the rude contrivance had been constructed.

Another weapon appeared to be wanting, in the shape of a large black bottle, containing rum. With this the Coromantee soon supplied himself, drawing one out from its secret hiding-place and holding it before the light, to make sure that it was full.

"Dis bottle," said he, as he thrust it into a pouch in his kaross, "I hab kep fo' dis 'special 'casion; it am de bess weapon fo' my puppos. When dem fellas get dar dose ob de rum, dar'll be no back out in 'em den. Golly!" he added, glancing out, and seeing that it was now quite dark, "a muss be gone fro' hya. By de time ole Adam sees de tellemgraff, an' gets 'cross dem 'ere mountains, it be late 'nuff for de bizness to begin."

Finishing with this reflection the sable conjurer took up his "telegraphic apparatus," and stepping over the threshold, hurried away from the hut to the Jumbo Rock.

On setting foot upon the summit, he undid the knot that fastened the skin mantle over his shoulders; and then taking off the garment, he spread it out upon the rock.

The stick he had brought up with him he placed along one edge, and there made it fast with some pieces of string. When this was accomplished, he lifted both stick and cloak from the rock, and proceeding to the palm, he laid the stick transversely across the stem, at about the height of his own hand, and then lashed it fast to the tree.

The kaross now hung down the stem, in a spread position, the transverse stick keeping it extended to its full width.

Satisfied that the skin cloak was extended in the proper direction, the Coromantee next took up his reflector-lamp; and having attached it against that side of the kaross facing toward the mountains, he took out his flint, steel, and tinder and, after striking a light, set the wick on fire.

In an instant the lamp burned brightly, and the light, reflected from the bits of looking-glass might have been seen from the back country to the distance of many miles; while, at the same time, it was completely screened from any eye looking from the side of the plantations. The projecting edges of the calabash hindered the rays from passing to either side; while the interposed disk of the spread kaross further prevented the "sheen" that otherwise might have betrayed the presence of the signal.

It was not meant for the eyes of honest men in the direction of Montego Bay, but for those of the robbers among the far hills of Trelawney.

"Whugh!" exclaimed Chakra, dropping his arms out of their fold, as if to set about some action. "I know'd dey wud soon see um. You-ner go'de answer!"

As he spoke a bright light was seen suddenly blazing up on the top of a distant eminence, which was suddenly extinguished.

After a short interval another, exactly similar, appeared in the same place, and in a similar manner went out again; and then, when an equal interval had elapsed, a third.

All three resembled flashes produced by powder ignited in a loose heap.

The moment the third response had been given to his signal, the Coromantee stepped up to his reflector and blew out the light.

"Dar's no use fo' you any mo'," said he, apostrophizing the lamp; "dar am some danger keepin' you dar. B'side, it am a gettin' cold up hya. A want my ole cloak."

So saying, he took down the reflector, and after it the kaross; and separating the latter from the piece of stick, he once more suspended the garment around his shoulders. This done, he moved forward to the front of the platform; and dropping his legs over, sat down upon the edge of the rock, as if to think over what he was going to do.

From the spot where he had seated himself, the mansion of Mount Welco-re was in view—that is, it would have been had it been daytime, or even a moonlight night. As it was, however, darkness veiled the whole valley under its opaque shadows, and the situation of the house could only have been guessed at had it not been for the light streaming through the jalousied windows. These revealed its position to the eyes of the Coromantee.

More than one window showed light—several that were side by side, giving out a strong glare. These Chakra knew to be the side windows of the great hall, or drawing-room. Its front windows could not be seen from the Jumbo Rock, since they faced toward the valley, and not to the mountain.

The reflections of the Coromantee were interrupted by a sound that caused him to draw his legs up on the rock, and assume an attitude as if about to spring to his feet.

At the repetition of the sound he started up, and rapidly re-crossed to the opposite side.

At the point where the upward path debouched upon the platform, he stopped to listen.

For the third time the sound was repeated. There was nothing strange in it—at least to ears familiar with the voices of a Jamaica forest. It was the call of a common yet peculiar bird—the *solitaire*.

Chakra's private slogan was different—more mournful and less musical. It was an imitation of that melancholy utterance heard at night from the sedgy shores of the dark lagoon—the cry of the wailing bittern.

With a small reed applied to his lips, the Coromantee produced an exact imitation of this cry, and then remained silent, awaiting the result.

At the bottom of the ravine could be heard a murmur of voices, as if several men were together, talking in guarded tones. Following this came a sound of scratching against the stones, and a rustling of branches, each moment becoming more distinct. Shortly after, the form of a man emerged out of the shadowy cleft, stepping cautiously upon the platform. Another followed, and another, until six in all stood upon the summit of the rock.

"Dat you, brodder Adam?" said Chakra, stepping forward to receive the first who presented himself at the head of the sloping path.

"Ya, yal Am it Chakra?"

"Dat same ole nigga."

"All right, kommarade. We've see yar signal as soon as it war hoisted. We wa'n't long a-comin', war we?"

"Berry quick. A didn't 'speck ye fo' half an hour mo'."

"Well, now we're hya, what's the game? I hope dar's a good big stake to play for! Our stock of stuff wants remplenishin' berry badly. We haven't had de chance of a job fo' more dan a month. We're a'most in want o' wittles!"

"Wittles!" exclaimed the myal-man, laying a scornful emphasis on the word. "Dar's a ting for ye do dis night dat'll gib ye mo' dan wittle—it gib you wealth—eberry one ob ye. Whugh!"

"Good!" ejaculated Adam, simultaneously with a chorus of like exclamations; "glad to hear dat 'ere bit o' intelligence. Am it dat 'ere little job you speak me 'bout last time I see you? Dat it, ole humpy?"

"Dat same," laconically answered Chakra—"only wi' dis diff'rence," added he, "dat a call um de big job in'tead of de little un."

"Big or little," rejoined the other, "we've come ready to do it—you see we hab?"

The speaker, who appeared to be the leader of the party who accompanied him, pointed to the others as he made this remark.

The hint was scarce regarded by Chakra. Notwithstanding the murky gloom that enveloped the forms of Adam and his companions, the myal-man could see that they were all armed and equipped, though in the most varied and uncouth fashions.

Eagerly willing were they for the extremest action; but, in order to make more certain of their compliance, Chakra thought it prudent to ply them with a little rum.

"Ma frien's," said he, in an affectionate tone, "you hab had de fatigue ob a long walk troo de darkness ob de night. A hab got hya a leetle drop ob somet'ing dat's berry good fo' keep de cold out ob you. 'Pose we all take a wet from dis bottle!"

To this proposition there was a general assent, expressed in varied phraseology. There was no fetotaler in that crowd of worthies.

Chakra had not thought of providing himself with either drinking-cup or calabash; but the want was scarcely felt. The robbers each in turn refreshed himself directly from the neck of the bottle, until the rum ran out.

"Well, de bumpy," said Adam, drawing Chakra aside, and speaking in that familiar phrase that betokened a thickness of thieves between them, "I suppose de chance you spoke 'bout hab come round at las?"

"Dat's a fack, brother Adam. It hab come now."

"De great tuckra gone from home?"

"He gone from home; and gone to home. Ha, Ha!"

"Come, dat's a riddle. What you mean by gone to home?"

"To 'im long home. Da's wha' I mean."

"Ha!" exclaimed Adam, "you don't say the Cussos—"

"Nebber mind 'bout the Cussus now, brodder Adam. Dat you know all 'bout atterward. It am the Cussus' silber plate dat consarn you now; and dar's no time to was'e in p'laverin'. By de time we gets down da, an' puts on de masks, dey'll be a-gwine to bed. Better dey wa' gone to bed; but by dat time, you see, de moon 'ud be up, an' fo' all dese clouds mout shine out. Dat, as you know, won't nebba do. We must 'ticipate de risin' ob de moon."

"True enuf. All right. I'm ready, and so are de rest."

"Den foller me, all ob you. We can plan de mode ob 'tack as we trabble 'long. Plenty ob

and a faint, when we find out how the land lies down below. Peller me!"

And with this injunction, the Coromantee commenced descending the ravine, followed by Adam and his band of burglars.

CHAPTER XXXIX. THE ABDUCTION.

To Chakra, viewing them from the summit of the Jumbo Rock, the well-lighted windows of Mount Welcome had proclaimed the presence of company within the mansion. In this, however, the Coromantee was mistaken. In the past such an appearance might have had that significance, or up to a very late period—that is, up to the date of the arrival of the distinguished Smythje. Since the latter had become the guest of Mount Welcome, however, the illumination of the mansion with chandelier and candelabra was not only not unusual, but had been the nightly practice.

The only individuals occupying the splendid apartments were Smythje and the young mistress of Mount Welcome; both yet ignorant of what had occurred upon the Savanna Road—that fearful event which had left Kate Vaughan a fatherless orphan, at the same time depriving her of the proud title we have just bestowed upon her.

Little did Kate Vaughan suspect that the corpse of her father—lying cold and lifeless upon a stretcher, and surrounded by strange mourners—was at that moment scarce five miles distant from where she sat, and slowly approaching the now masterless mansion of Mount Welcome!

Little did she suspect, while making music for Smythje, that from another direction monsters in human form were moving toward that mansion, their dark shadows projected across the glare of the window lights—now stationary, now flitting stealthily onward, at each progressive movement drawing nearer and nearer to the wall!

Not a word of warning, a sign or gesture, was given to the occupants of the apartment, until, with wild, unearthly yells, half-a-dozen fiend-like forms—men of horrid aspect—some with black masks, others with naked visage even more hideous to behold—burst into the grand hall, and commenced the work of pillage.

One, of gigantic size, masked from crown to throat, and wrapped in an ample covering of skin, though not sufficient to conceal the deformity of a hunched back, rushed directly up to where the fair musician was seated, and dashing the harp to one side, commenced dragging his shrieking victim across the room toward the stair entrance, knocking Smythje out of the way like a baby.

In less than a score of seconds Adam and his confederates had the mansion to themselves.

It was but the work of a few minutes to fling open the buffets and sideboards and plunder them of their most valuable contents. In less than a quarter of an hour the black burglars had finished their "job," and were ready to depart.

In an incredibly short space of time the harp, the chairs, the ottomans, and other articles of light furniture, were piled up in the middle of the floor, the jalousies were wrenched from their fastenings, flung upon the heap, and then set on fire.

Quick as tinder the dry wood blazed up, and in five minutes the noble mansion of Mount Welcome was in flames.

In five minutes more, under the red glare, flung far out into the distant fields, the robbers were seen, slowly and laboriously seeking concealment within the shadows beyond—six of them burdened with shining utensils that gave back the gleam of the blazing mansion, while the seventh, the most formidable figure of all, carried in his arms an object of far different kind, the body of a beautiful woman—the fainting form of Lilly Quasheba!

In solemn pace the procession which accompanied the corpse of Custos Vaughan moved silently on along the lonely road. The Jumbo Rock was now in sight, encircled by the last rays of the sinking sun. Beyond lay Mount Welcome, a house to which the sad cortege was about to carry the cue for wailing and desolation.

They stopped to consider what was best to be done.

A plan soon suggested itself. A messenger could be sent forward upon one of the horses to communicate the sad tidings to Trusty, the overseer, and through him the melancholy news might be more gradually made known to her whom it most concerned.

The man received his instructions, and having mounted his own horse rode off at such speed as the darkness, now down upon the earth, would permit.

For another hour the party remained in the place where they had halted, to give time for the messenger to execute his commission. Then once more taking the road, they moved forward at a slow pace, Herbert alongside Cubina—now a-foot, and leading the horse upon which he had hitherto ridden.

In this way the cortege had proceeded for

some half mile or so beyond its last resting-place, when it was again brought to a halt by the orders of those in the lead.

The cause of this interruption was declared to all of the party at once. All heard the hoof-strokes of a horse coming rapidly along the road, and from the opposite direction to that in which they were moving.

It was not without a feeling of surprise, as the horseman dashed forward upon the ground and pulled up in front of the procession, that Herbert and Cubina recognized the returned attendant.

He left them no time to speculate on the mystery of his reappearance. The white froth upon the flanks of his steed, shining through the gloom, told of fast riding, while the stammering and terrified accents in which the man proclaimed the purpose of his return, rendered more startling the news he had to communicate.

Mount Welcome was at that moment attacked by a band of burglars, robbers and murderers!

There were men in masks and men without them—equally terrible to look upon. They were plundering the great hall, had murdered Mr. Smythje, were ill-treating the young mistress of the mansion, and firing guns and pistols at every one who came in their way!

"Quaco!" cried the Maroon captain, rushing to the rear, and addressing himself to his lieutenant, "think you our men can hear us from here? Sound your horn on the instant: your blast is stronger than mine. There is trouble at Mount Welcome. We may need every man of them. Quick—quick!"

"The devil!" cried Quaco, dropping his hold of the halter, and raising the horn to his mouth; "I'll make them hear if they're in the island of Jamaica. You keep your ground, ye pair of John Crows!" he added, as he held the horn an inch or two from his lips. "If either of you budge a foot out of your places, I'll send a brace of bullets through your stinkin' carcasses, and stop you that way. See if I don't!"

And with this emphatic admonition, the colossus applied the horn to his mouth, and blew a blast that might have been heard for miles.

In echoes it rung from the sides of the Jumbo Rock, and from many a peak lying far beyond. So loud and shrill rung it, that one might almost have believed in Quaco's affirmation—that it could be heard to the extremity of the island!

At all events, it was heard by some not so far off; for scarce had its echoes ceased to reverberate, when half-a-dozen similar sounds, proceeding from different directions, and apparently from different distances, came back in response.

Cubina waited not to hear their repetition.

"Enough," cried he, "there are half-a-dozen of them anyhow. That will no doubt be enough. You, Quaco, stay here till they come up, and then follow to Mount Welcome. Sound again, to direct them; and see that these two murderous villains don't escape you."

"Hadn't I better put a brace of bullets through them?" naively inquired Quaco. "It'll save trouble if I do that. What say you, Capen Cubina?"

"No no, Quaco; justice will settle accounts with them. Bring them on along with you; and follow as soon as our men get up!"

Before Quaco could offer any further suggestions, the Maroon captain had mounted the messenger's horse—Herbert having already leaped into the saddle of the other, and both, without further speech, rode forward as fast as their steeds could carry them.

In a few minutes they had attained the summit of the ridge, whence they could command a full view of the valley of Mount Welcome.

The mansion was in flames.

"Too late! too late!" muttered both the horsemen in the same breath; and then, with despair on their faces and black fear in their hearts, they once more gave rein to their steeds; and riding recklessly down the slope, galloped on toward the conflagration.

It was evident the conflagration had been going on for some time. The upper story—which was but a framework of light timber—was now nearly consumed, and only the stonework below left standing. Over this the larger beams had fallen, no longer emitting flame, but lying transversely upon each other, charred, red, and smoldering.

As the two men turned in the direction of the negro village, a figure started up in the path, having just emerged out of the bushes. In that semblance to the imp of darkness, seen under the distant glare of the conflagration, Herbert recognized his old acquaintance Quashie.

Quashie had already identified him.

"Oh, young massr!" cried the darky, as he rose to his feet; "de Buff am a-blazin'! It be all burn up!"

"Crambo! tell us something we don't know!" impatiently demanded Cubina. "Who has set it on fire? Do you know that?"

"Did you see the incendiaries?" hurriedly added Herbert.

"See who, massr?"

"Those who set the house on fire?" inquired Herbert, still speaking with anxious haste.

"See yonner!" exclaimed Quashie, emphatically, pointing toward the burning pile, and speaking in an accent of alarm. "Golly! dey ain't gone 'way yet—de robbers! de robbers!"

Herbert and Cubina faced suddenly round. As they did so, they perceived several dark forms moving between them and the bright background of the flames; their shadows projected in gigantic outlines up to the spot where the spectators stood.

Both sprung forward, regardless of consequences, resolved upon knowing the worst; and if their apprehensions should prove true, determined upon death or vengeance.

With their pieces cocked, and ready for instant execution, Cubina and Herbert were pressing to get within range, when the notes of a horn, sounded by one of the men before the fire, came swelling upon their ears.

The sounds were re-answering. Cubina knew the signal of his lieutenant, and they were now near enough to recognize the colossal Quaco standing in the glare of red light, surrounded by some half-dozen of his comrades.

Quaco had left the corpse upon the road, and the prisoners well guarded by a couple of his followers; and thinking he might be wanted at Mount Welcome, had hurried forward close upon the heels of the horsemen.

This accession of strength might have proved useful had the enemy been upon the ground. Where were the robbers—the incendiaries—perhaps the murderers? Where was Miss Vaughan? Where the maid Yola?

Had they escaped among the domestics, or had they perished in the flames?

Fearful as was the thought, it could not fail to be entertained; and in the solemn silence which the reflection produced, all stood hopelessly gazing upon the ruthless fire that was fast reducing the noble mansion to a shapeless and smoldering ruin.

At that moment the stillness was interrupted by a voice proceeding from an unexpected quarter. It appeared to come from out the great arched vault under the stone stairway, from a corner shrouded in comparative darkness. It was partly an exclamation, partly a groan.

Quaco was the first to seek an explanation. Seizing a fagot still flared, he rushed under the archway, regardless of the scorching heat.

Herbert and Cubina quickly followed, and all three stood within the vault.

Quaco waved the torch in front of his body, to illuminate the place.

The eyes of all three simultaneously rested upon an object that, at any other time, might have elicited from them peals of laughter.

In the corner of the vault stood a half-boghead, or large tub, its head covered with a heavy lid. Near the upper edge a square hole had been sawed out; so that a hand containing a quart measure might be inserted, without the necessity of raising the lid. Inside, and directly opposite this opening, appeared the face of a man, with ample whiskers and mustaches; which face, despite the bedaubment of something that resembled treacle or tar, was at once identified as that of the aristocratic Smythje!

"Mr. 'Mythje!" cried Quashie, who had followed the others under the archway. "I seed him—"

"Fact, ma fwends, it's nawbody else but masself," interrupted the ludicrous image within the boghead, as soon he recognized his ancient deliverer, Quaco. "Aw took wefuge here fwom those howid wotbers. Be so good as to waise the wid, and pawmit me to get out of this queeaw situation. Aw was afwaid aw should be dwowned. Ba Jawwe! aw bwieve its tweekle!"

Quaco, endeavoring to suppress his laughter, lost no time in throwing up the lid, and extracting the sufferer from his sweet, though unpleasant position—for it was, in reality, a boghead of molasses into which the terrified Smythje had soused himself, in which, during the continuance of the tragedy enacted over his head, he had remained buried up to the neck!

Placed upright upon his legs on the flagged floor of the vault, glistening from neck to heel with a thick coat of the slimy treacle, the proud proprietor of Montagu Castle presented even a more ludicrous appearance than when Quaco had last seen him upon the summit of the hollow stump.

The latter, recalling this scene to memory, and unrestrained by other sentiments, could no longer restrain himself from giving way to loud laughter, in which Quashie, equally free from sorrow, took part.

With Herbert and Cubina it was not the moment for mirth; and as soon as Smythje had been fairly deposited on his feet, both eagerly questioned him as to the circumstances that had transpired.

Smythje admitted having fled—at the same time making an awkward attempt to justify himself. According to his own account, and the statement was perfectly true, it was not till after he had been overpowered and struck down, that he betook himself to flight. How could he do otherwise? His antagonist was a giant, a man of vast magnitude and strength.

"A howid queetyaw," continued Smythje; "a queetyaw with long arms, and a defawmety

—a pwtubewance upon his shawders, like the haunch of a dwomedaw!"

"And what of Kate, my cousin?" cried Herbert, interrupting the exquisite, with contemptuous impatience.

"Aw—aw—yes! yaw cousin—ma paw Kate! A feaw the wobbers have bawn her off. A know she was bwrought outside. Aw heard haw scweam out as they were dwagging haw down the stailw—aw—aw—"

"Thank Heaven, then!" exclaimed Herbert; "thank Heaven, she still lives!"

Cubina had not waited for the whole of Smythje's explanation. The description of the robber had given him his cue! and rushing outside, he blew a single blast upon his horn—the "assembly" of his band.

The Maroons, who had scattered around the ruin, instantly obeyed the signal, and soon mustered on the spot.

"Upon the scent, comrades!" cried Cubina. "I know the wild boar that has been making this havoc. I know where the monster makes his den. *Crambo!* Ere an hour passes over his head, he shall answer for this villainy with his accursed life. Follow me!"

As Cubina pronounced this command, he faced toward the mountain, and was hastening to gain the wicket in the garden-wall, when an object came before his eyes that caused him to halt. Amid the gloom, it was a sight that gave him joy.

He was not the only one to whom it brought gladness. Among the Maroons that had come with Quaco was one who had been suffering anguish equally with Herbert and Cubina—one who had equal cause for grief—if not for the loss of sweetheart or cousin, for that which should be dear as either—a sister.

A sister for whose sake he had crossed the wide ocean, had been sold into slavery, robbed by ruthless men, branded as a felon, chastised by the cruel scourge, had suffered every indignity which man could put on man. In this individual may be identified the young Foolah prince—the unfortunate Cingues.

What was it that gave Cubina joy, shared thus by Cingues?

It may be easily guessed. It was the sight of a female form, recognized by both—the sweetheart of the one, the sister of the other—Yola!

The girl was at that moment seen coming through the wicket-gate. Once inside, she made no stop, but hastened across the garden toward the group of men.

In another instant she was standing between her lover and brother, sharing the embrace of both.

Her story was soon told, and by all listened to with breathless attention; by Herbert Vaughan with emotions that wrung blood-drops from his heart. It was short, but far too long for the impatience of apprehension and revenge.

The girl had been in one of the chambers as the robbers entered the great hall. Regardless of consequences, she had rushed out among them. Like Smythje, she had been struck down, and lay for some minutes insensible, unconscious of what was transpiring.

When her senses returned, and she could look around her, she perceived that her young mistress was no longer in the room. The monsters were at that moment in the act of setting fire to the mansion.

A scream outside directed her. She recognized the voice of her mistress.

Springing to her feet, she glided through the open door, and down the stairway. The robbers were too much occupied—some with their booty, others with their scheme of incendiarism; they either did not observe or did not think it worth while—further to molest her.

On getting outside, she saw her young mistress borne off in the arms of a huge, misshapen man. He wore a mask over his face; but for all this she could tell that it was the same individual she had seen upon the preceding night in company with the Jew. The masked man, whose attention seemed wholly engrossed by his precious prize, went off alone, leaving the others to continue their work of plunder and devastation.

The African maid, in her native land habituated to similar scenes, with a quick instinct perceived the impossibility of rescuing her mistress at that moment; and abandoning the idea of making an idle attempt, she determined to follow and ascertain to what place the robber was taking her. She might then return to Mount Welcome, and guide those who would be sent upon the pursuit.

Gliding silently along the path, and taking care not to show herself, she had kept the robber in view, without losing sight of him for a moment. The darkness was in her favor, as also the sloping path, enabling her to see from below, while she was herself in little danger of being seen.

In this way had she followed the robber up the declivity of the mountain, and in an oblique direction across it, still keeping close behind him; when all at once, and to her astonishment, she saw him suddenly disappear into the earth, bearing her young mistress upon his arm, like some monstrous fiend of the other

world, who had stolen a sweet image of this, and was carrying her to his dread home in the regions of darkness.

Notwithstanding the supernatural fear with which the sudden disappearance had inspired her, the bold maiden was not deterred from proceeding to the spot.

Both her terror and astonishment were in some degree modified when she looked over a cliff, and saw the sheen of water at the bottom of a dark abyss yawning beneath her feet. In the dim light she could trace something like a means of descent down the face of the cliff, and this at once dispelled all idea of the supernatural.

She made no attempt to follow further. She had seen enough to enable her to guide the pursuit; and instantly turning back upon the path, she hastened down the declivity of the mountain.

She was thinking of Cubina and his Maroons—how soon her courageous sweetheart with his brave band would have rescued her unfortunate mistress—when at that moment, in the light of the flickering fire, she recognized the very image that was occupying her thoughts.

Her story was communicated in hurried phrase to Cubina and his comrades, who, without losing a moment of time, passed through the wicket gate, and with all the speed in their power commenced ascending the mountain road.

Yola remained behind with the Quashie and the other domestics, who were now flocking around the great fire, looking like spectres in the flickering light.

Cubina required no guide to conduct him. Forewarned by that wild conversation he had overheard, as well as by the events of the preceding day, he had already surmised the author of that hellish deed. More than surmised it: he was satisfied that, whatever head had planned, the hand that had perpetrated it was that of Chakra the Coromantee.

CHAPTER XL

THE TRAIL.

EAGER as hounds upon a fresh trail—quick as young, strong limbs could carry them—pressed the pursuers up the steep path that led to the Duppy's Hole.

The horses had been left behind. On the steep and tangled path they would have been only an incumbrance.

Perhaps never before, by man on foot, had that path been traversed in so short a space of time. No stop was made anywhere, till the pursuers stood upon the edge of the Duppy cliff, and looked down into that dark abyss, where they hoped to find the spoiler and his victim.

Scarce a moment there, either. One after another they descended the tree stairway, Cubina going first, Herbert next, the others following, with like rapidity.

With the instinct of trained hunters, all made the descent in silence. Only on arriving at the bottom of the cliff did an exclamation escape from the lips of their chief—Cubina.

The sight of a canoe, drawn up under the bushes, had elicited this exclamation, which expressed surprise mingled with disappointment.

Herbert saw the canoe almost at the same instant of time, but without drawing the inference that had caused Cubina to utter that cry. He turned to the latter for an explanation.

"The canoe?" whispered Cubina, pointing down to the little craft half-hidden under the leafy branches.

"I see it," said Herbert, also speaking in a whisper. "What does it signify?"

"They have gone out again. Perhaps it is only Chakra himself; or maybe some one of the robbers who have been helping him, and who may be expected to return again. In any case we must search the valley and make sure. Step into the canoe! You can't swim in your clothes, while my fellows are not embarrassed in that way. Here, Quaco! get your guns aboard this cockle-shell, and all of you take to the water. Swim silently. No splashing, do you hear? Keep close under the cliff! Swim within the shadow, and straight for the other side."

Without more delay the guns were passed from hand to hand until all were deposited in the canoe.

Cubina and Herbert had already stepped into the frail craft, the former taking possession of the paddle.

In another instant the little vessel shot out from the bushes, and glided silently under the shadow of the cliff.

Some half-dozen human forms, their heads just appearing above the surface of the water, followed in its wake—swimming with as little noise as if they had been a brood of beavers.

There was no need to direct the canoe to its old landing-place under the tree. Cubina knew that this had been chosen for concealment. Instead of going thither, he made for the nearest point of the opposite shore. On touching land he stepped out, making a sign to his fellow-voyager to imitate his example.

The Maroons waded out the moment after; and once more getting hold of their guns, followed their captain and his companion—already on their route to the upper cascade.

As they advanced, the underwood became easier to traverse, and they were enabled to proceed more rapidly.

They reached, at length, the edge of the opening that extended for some distance beyond the branches of the cotton-tree. The hut was before their eyes. A light was shining through the open door.

Making a sign to his followers to stay among the trees, the Maroon captain, with Herbert by his side, crept up toward the cotton-tree.

Having got fairly under its shadow, they rose to their feet, and with the silence of disembodied spirits, glided close up to the entrance of the hut.

In another instant the silence was broken by both. A simultaneous cry escaped them as they arrived in front of the open door and looked in. It was a cry that expressed the extreme of disappointment. The hovel was empty!

To ascertain this fact it was not necessary to enter within the shrine of the Coromantee Pantheon. Nevertheless, Cubina and Herbert, as if moved by a mechanical impulse, rushed inside the door.

They looked around with inquiring glances. There were signs of late occupation. The lighted lamp was of itself sufficient evidence of this. Who save Chakra could have lit it? It was a lamp of lard, burning in the carapace of a tortoise. It could not have been long alight, since but little of the lard was consumed.

There was no doubt that Chakra had been there with his captive. That added nothing to the knowledge they possessed already, since Yc'a had witnessed their descent into the Duppy's Hole.

But why had the robber so suddenly forsaken this apparently safe retreat? That the lamp was left burning betokened a hasty departure. And whither could he have gone?

"Oh, where?—oh, where?" distractedly interrogated Herbert.

Cubina could make no answer. He was equally astonished at not finding the Coromantee within his hut.

Had he once more gone out from the Duppy's Hole? The position of the canoe gave color to this conjecture. But why should he have done so? Had he caught sight of that agile girl gliding like a shadow after him? and, becoming suspicious that his retreat might be discovered, had he forsaken it for some other at a greater distance from the scene of his crime?

In any case, why should he have left in such haste, not staying to put out the light—much less to carry with him his peculiar Penates?

"After all," thought Cubina, "he may still be in the Duppy's Hole. The canoe may have been used by some one else—some confederate. Chakra might have seen his pursuers crossing the lagoon, or heard them advancing through the thicket, and, taking his captive along with him, may have hastily retreated into some dark recess among the trees."

His sudden abandonment of the hovel rendered this view of the case the more probable.

Quick as came the thought, Cubina once more rushed out of the hut, and summoning his men around him, directed them to procure torches and search every corner of the wood. Quaco was dispatched back to the canoe, with order to stay by it, and prevent any chance of escape in that direction.

While the Maroons proceeded to procure the torch-wood, their chief, accompanied by Herbert, commenced quartering the open ground in search of any trace which Chakra might have left.

By the edge of the water, where the trees stood thinly, the moon afforded ample light to favor the investigation.

On advancing toward the cascade, an object came under the eyes of Cubina that caused him to utter a quick ejaculation. It was some thing white that lay by the side of the caldron into which the stream was precipitated. With the pool itself were broad flakes of white foam floating upon the water; but this was not in the water, but above it, on one of the boulders; and all the more conspicuous from the black color of the rock.

Herbert had seen the white object at the same instant of time, and both simultaneously ran forward to examine it.

A scarf!

It bore evidence of ill-usage. It was tossed and torn, as if it had fallen from some one who had been struggling!

Neither could identify the scarf, but neither doubted to whom it had belonged. Its quality declared it to have been the property of a lady. Who else could have owned it but she for whom they were in search?

Cubina appeared to pay less attention to the scarf than to the place in which it lay. It was close up to the cliff, on the very edge of the pool into which the stream was projected.

Behind the pool, and under the curved steels

of the falling water, a sort of ledge ran across, by which one could pass under the cascade.

Cubina knew this; for while on his hunting excursions he had gone under it. He knew, moreover, that half way across there was a large cave or grotto, in the cliff, several feet above the water in the pool.

These reflections cost Cubina scarce two seconds of time. Quick as the conjecture had shaped itself, he ran back to the hut, and seizing a torch, which one of his men had prepared, he hurried back toward the cascade.

Then, signing to Herbert and one or two others to follow him, he glided under the canopy of falling waters.

He proceeded not rashly, but with due caution. There might be others within the cave besides Chakra. His robber confederates might be there, and these the Maroon knew to be desperate characters—men of forfeit lives, who would die before suffering themselves to be captured.

With his drawn *machete* in one hand, and the torch in the other, Cubina advanced silently and stealthily toward the entrance of the grotto. Herbert was close behind, grasping his double-barreled gun, in readiness to fire, in case resistance should be offered from within.

Holding the torch in advance of him, Cubina entered first, though Herbert, anxious and eager, was close upon his heels.

The glare of the torch was reflected back from a thousand sparkling stalactites, and for a while the sight of both was bewildered.

Soon, however, their eyes became accustomed to the dazzling coruscation; and then a white object, lying along the floor of the cave, seen by both at the same instant, caused them to utter a simultaneous cry—as they did so, turning to each other with looks of the most painful despair.

Between two large masses of stalagmite was the body of a woman, robed in white. It was lying upon its back, stretched out to its full length—motionless, apparently dead, and the face was that of Kate Vaughan.

The Maroons, quietly crossing their arms under the inanimate form, raised it from the rock; and following him who had given them their silent direction, they bore it to the hut, there placing it upon the cane couch. With instinctive delicacy all retired upon the completion of their task, leaving Herbert and Cubina alone with the body.

An interval elapsed before either essayed to speak. Both were under the influence of profound grief that almost stifled reflection. Cubina was the first to have other thoughts, and to give expression to them.

"*Santa Virgen!*" said he, in a voice husky with emotion, "I know not how she has died, unless the sight of Chakra has killed her. It was enough to have done it."

Herbert was hindered from making reply. A dark form appearing in the door, distracted the attention of both from the theme of their conversation.

Quaco had heard the melancholy tidings, and relieved from his duty by the canoe, had hurried back to the hut.

Having stopped inside, the colossus stood for some moments by the couch, gazing down upon the sweet, silent face. Even on his features was depicted an expression of sorrow.

Gradually this became more subdued, or rather appeared to undergo a total change—slowly but surely altering to an expression of cheerfulness.

Slight at first, and imperceptible on account of the large scale upon which Quaco's features were formed, the expression was every moment becoming more pronounced; until at length it attracted the notice of the others, notwithstanding the abstraction caused by their poignant grief.

Both observed it at the same instant, and to both it caused a feeling of annoyance, amounting almost to indignation.

"Lieutenant," said Cubina, addressing his subaltern in a tone of reproach, "it is not exactly the time for being gay. May I ask you what is making you smile, while others around you are overwhelmed with sorrow?"

"Why, capten," rejoined Quaco, "I can't see what yar all a-grievin' 'bout. If you mean the young buckra lady, I'd give all the barbecued hog I ever owned nebber to be more dead than she jess now. Dead, i'deed! nonsense dat; she only sleep!"

Herbert and Cubina started from their seats, each uttering a cry of astonishment, in which might be detected the accents of hope.

"Ho!" exclaimed Quaco, suddenly, clutching hold of a vial that lay upon the floor—now for the first time noticed.

"What we got here?" continued he, drawing the cork with his teeth and thrusting the neck up his wide nostril. "Sleepin' draught! I thought so. So this is the spell that's put the young buckra lady to rest. Well, there's another that'll wake her, if I can only find it. It's boun' to be hya, somewheres about; and if I can git my claws on it I'll make this hya young creatur' talk to ye in less than ten minutes."

So saying, the colossus commenced searching around the hut, looking into the numerous

chinks and crannies with which both walls and roof were provided.

"Only a sleep-spell," said Quaco, still continuing his search; "nothin' more than that—a draught given her by the myal-doctor. I know it well enough, and I knows what'll make all right again, though 'bout that she'd come to of herself. A—ha! hyar it is! hyar's the anecdote!"

A small bottle glistened between his fingers, which in another instant was uncorked and brought in contact with his nostrils.

"Yes, dis is the stuff that's a-goin' to counter-track that spell. In less'n ten minutes' time you see her wake up, brisk as ebber she been in her life. Now, young master, if you jess hold up the young lady's head while I spill a drop or two down her throat. It must go down to do her good."

Herbert, with joyful willingness, obeyed the request, and the beautiful head received the support of his arm.

Quaco, with all the gentleness of which his huge, coarse fingers were capable, parted the pale lips, and inserting the neck of the vial, poured out a portion of the contents into the mouth of the sleeper. This done, he held the bottle for some minutes to her nostrils, and then laying it aside, he commenced chafing her hands between his own broad, corrugated palms.

Scarce five minutes had elapsed from the time of administering the antidote—to Herbert they appeared fifty—when the bosom of the sleeper was seen to swell upward, at the same time that a sigh, just audible, escaped from her lips.

Herbert could no longer restrain his emotions. With a cry of supreme joy, he bent his face nearer to that of the young girl, and pressed his lips to hers, at the same time gently murmuring her name.

"Be quiet, young master," cautioned Quaco, "else you may keep her longer from wakin' up. Hab patience. Leave the anecdote to do its work. 'Ta'n't goin' to be very long."

Herbert, thus counseled, resumed his former attitude, and remained silently but earnestly gazing upon the beautiful face, already showing signs of reanimation.

As Quaco had predicted, the "anecdote" was not long in manifesting its effects. The bosom of the young girl began to rise and fall in quick spasmodic motion, showing that respiration was struggling to return, while at shorter intervals sighs escaped her, audible even amid the sounds so similar heard from without.

"Herbert, cousin!" she exclaimed as soon as speech was restored to her. "It is you? Where am I? No matter, since you are by me. It is your arm that is around me!"

"Yes, dearest cousin—never more to part from this sweet embrace. Oh, speak to me! Tell me that you live!"

"Live? Ah, you thought me dead! I thought so myself. That horrid monster! He is gone? I see him not here. Oh, I am saved! It is you, Herbert, you who have delivered me from worse than death!"

"Mine is not the merit, cousin. This brave man by my side—it is he to whom we are both indebted for this deliverance."

"Cubina! and Yola!—poor Yola! She, too, has escaped? Oh, it is a fearful thing. I cannot comprehend—"

"Dearest cousin! think not of it now. In time you shall understand all. Know that you are safe—that all danger is past."

"My poor father! if he knew—Chakra alive—that fearful monster!"

Herbert was silent, Cubina at the same time withdrawing from the hut to give some orders to his followers.

"Ah, cousin! what is that upon your breast?" inquired the young girl, innocently touching the object with her fingers. "Is it not the ribbon you took from my purse? Have you been wearing it all this time?"

"Ever since that hour! Oh, Kate! no longer can I conceal the truth. I love you! I love you! I have heard— But tell me, dearest cousin! with your own lips declare it, do you return my love?"

"I do! I do!"

Once more Herbert kissed the lips that had given utterance to the thrilling declaration.

In that kiss two loving souls were sealed forever.

The midnight hour had passed ere the lovers forsook the solitude of the Duppy's Hole.

Slowly Herbert and his cousin moved down the mountain. The moon, now shining sweetly upon the perfumed path, favored their descent; but there was no need—no desire for haste. Cubina kept ahead to secure them from surprise or danger. They had nothing to do but talk love to each other.

CHAPTER XLI, AN ORPHAN.

THE earnest utterances of love exchanged between the two cousins were suddenly interrupted. Sounds of woe broke upon the stillness of the night.

They had arrived within view of what was once the mansion of Mount Welcome.

Through the foliage that fringed the path, they could see glancing some remnants of red

light, here and there flickering into a faint blaze. Now and then, as they descended the slope, they had heard the crash of falling timbers, as they gave way under the wasting fire.

A murmur of human voices, too, had reached their ears; but only as of men engaged in an ordinary conversation; or, at all events, not exhibiting excitement beyond what might be expected at the *finale* of such a scene as had there transpired.

All at once abruptly breaking upon this comparative tranquillity—at the same time interrupting the dialogue of the lovers—were heard utterances of a far different import; the cries of men, the screaming of women, shots, and loud shouting.

All these sounds appeared to proceed from the spot that but a few hours before had echoed to the clangor of a chorus equally diabolical in its accents.

Cubina, who had been moving some paces in advance, sprang instantly back upon the path; and, with troubled look, stopped in front of the lovers.

"What can it mean?" asked Herbert, equally showing signs of apprehension.

"The robbers! Master Vaughan! They have returned; but for what purpose I cannot guess. It must be they. I know that voice, louder than the rest. Do you hear it? 'Tis the voice of the brigand Adam! *Grampo!* I'll silence it some day ere long—maybe, this very night. Hark! there's another, still louder and wilder. Ho! that, too, I can distinguish. It's the bellish shriek of Chakra!"

"But why should they have come again? They took everything a robber would care for. What can have brought them back? There is nothing—"

"There is!" cried Cubina, with a quick gesture, as though the solution had just then presented itself to his mind. "*There is Yola!*"

As he said this he faced around, as if about to rush toward the fray, still strepitant—its noise rather on the increase.

For an instant he appeared to be undecided; though not from any fear of going forward.

No, it was another thought that had caused that indecision; which was soon made manifest by his words.

"Master Herbert Vaughan!" he exclaimed in a tone of appeal, "I have helped you to rescue your sweetheart. Mine is in danger!"

The young Englishman stood in no need of this appeal. Already he had disengaged his arm from that of his cousin, and stood ready for action.

In a few seconds they ran down to the garden-wall, and passed rapidly through the wicket-gate, which they found standing open; on through the garden, and straight toward the place from which they imagined the sounds had proceeded.

Strange enough, these had ceased as abruptly as they had risen—the cries of the men, the screaming of the women, the shots, and the loud shouting.

All, as if by a simultaneous signal, had become silent, as though the earth had opened and swallowed not only the noises, but those who had been causing them!

Unheeding the change, Herbert and Cubina kept on; nor came to a stop until they had passed the smoking remains of the mansion, and stood upon the platform that fronted it.

There halted they.

There was still some fitful light from the burning beams; but the beams of the moon told a truer tale. They illuminated a *tableau* significant as terrible.

Near the spot was a stretcher, on which lay the corpse of a white man, half uncovered, ghastly as death could make it. Close to it were three others, corpses like itself, only that they were those of men with a black epidermis.

Herbert easily identified the first. It had been his companion on that day's journey. It was the corpse of his uncle.

As easily did Cubina recognize the others. They were, or had been, men of his own band—the Maroons—left by Quaco to guard the prisoners.

The prisoners! where were they? Escaped!

It took Cubina but little time to resolve the mystery. To the practiced eye of one who had tied up many a black runaway, there was no difficulty in interpreting the sign there presented to his view.

A tangle of ropes and sticks brought to mind the contrivances of Quaco for securing his captives. They lay upon the trodden ground, cast away, and forsaken.

The *cacadores* had escaped. The affair had been a rescue!

Rather relieved by this conjecture, which soon assumed the form of a conviction, Herbert and Cubina were about returning to the place where they had left the young creole—whom they supposed to be still awaiting them.

But they had not calculated on the bravery of love—much less upon its recklessness.

Love could no longer endure that anxious suspense. The young creole had forsaken her shelter to share the danger of him she adored.

Before either could interfere to prevent the catastrophe, she had passed through the wicket

—a way better known to her than to them—and came gliding across the garden, up to the spot where they stood.

An exclamation of joy announced her perception that her lover was still unharmed.

Quick as an echo, a second exclamation escaped from her lips—but one of a far different intonation. It was a cry of wildest despair—the utterance of one who suddenly knew herself to be an orphan. Her eyes had fallen upon the corpse of her father!

CHAPTER XLII.

CONCLUSION.

THERE is but little more to tell of the fortunes of those personages, black, white and yellow, whom our readers have so far followed.

Chakra, the Myal-man, and his confederate, Jessuron, had gone one step too far when they rescued the villainous *cacadores* from their Maroon guards at Mount Welcome. In the active pursuit that followed, Chakra himself with Jessuron and the *cacadores*, were chased into their retreat of the Duppy's Hole and cornered there. Attempting to escape by the lagoon they got into the current of the cataract and were all swept over and finally dashed to pieces. Turn we then from them to pleasanter pictures.

On the morning that succeeded the occurrence of these tragic events, one entering at the great gate of Mount Welcome estate, and directing his eye up the long, palm-shaded avenue, would have beheld but a mass of black smoking ruins.

On any other morning, twelve months after, the eye of a person looking in the same direction would have been gladdened by a sight far different. Smiling in all its splendor, at the end of that vegetable vista, once more could be seen the proud mansion of Mount Welcome—renewed in every respect—its stone stairway still standing—its white walls and green-jalousied windows looking as if they had sprung, phoenix-like, from the flames—every item of the architecture so closely in imitation of the former structure that even the eye of an old acquaintance could have detected no trace of the transformation.

Outside, everything appeared as before. It was only upon entering the mansion that you might perceive a change, and this chiefly relating to its occupancy and ownership. Instead of a stout, red-faced, and somewhat plebeian personage, of over forty years old, you would see in the present proprietor of Mount Welcome a youth of noble mien, by age scarcely claiming the privileges of manhood, but in aspect and demeanor evidently fit for the performance of its duties—deserving to be the master of that aristocratic mansion.

Near him—oh! certain to be near him—there is one upon whom the eye rests with still greater interest; one who had graced the old mansion—yet more gracing the new—the daughter of its former proprietor, the wife of its present one.

She has not even changed her name—only her condition. Lilly Quasheba is no longer Miss but Mrs. Vaughan.

Both these personages may be seen seated in that great hall, with floor as smooth and furniture as resplendent as ever.

It is the hour after breakfast, and also, as of yore, the hour when the post may be expected. Not that either cared to look abroad for that diurnal messenger—more welcome to those around whom hymen has not yet wound his golden chain.

Equally indifferent were these two happy individuals to the actions of the outside world; neither cared for its news. Their love, still in the fresh flush of its honeymoon, was world enough for them; and what interests could either feel in the arrival of the mail?

But the post has no respect either for indifference or anxiety. It is transmitted alike to the grave and the gay. It brings joy to the heart heavy-laden, and sorrow to that which the moment before its arrival may have been bounding with bliss.

In that great hall in the mansion of Mount Welcome there were two bosoms brimful of bliss, or a feeling near akin to it. Nay, why should we say *akin* to it, since they were two hearts in the enjoyment of a mutual love? If that be not bliss, there is no other—either on earth or in heaven.

Without any attempt at concealment, the eyes of both betrayed their mutual delight. Gazing on each other, in sweet reciprocal admiration, they saw not that dark form—rudely centaurean—that approached up the long avenue.

Had they seen it, it would have created no surprise. It was only the postboy Quashie, on his shaggy cob, returning from the Bay.

After this speculative peroration, the reader may be apprehensive of some dire development springing from the letter-bag slung over the shoulders of the darky.

Nothing of the kind. There was a letter, but not one that might be unwelcome. But for the postmark it might have remained for hours unopened.

But the impress was peculiar. It was African. The letter was stamped with the name of a port near the mouth of the Gambia. It was addressed

sed to "Herbert Vaughan, Esq., Mount Welcome, Jamaica."

The young planter broke the seal, and rapidly ran over the contents of the letter.

"From your brother Cubina," said he, though he knew that he imparted no information by this. "He writes to say that he is coming back again to Jamaica."

"Oh, I am so glad of that! I knew he would never live contented among those wild people, notwithstanding he has been made a prince over them; but Yola—"

"She comes with him, of course. It is not likely he would leave her behind. She longs for her island-home again. I don't wonder, dearest Kate! There is one spot on the earth hallowed beyond all others—the spot where heart meets heart in the free confession of a mutual love. No wonder the African maiden should desire to return to it. Human nature is everywhere the same. To me this island is the elysium of earth."

"Ah! to me also!"

On giving utterance to this mutual confession, the young husband and wife bent toward each other, and pressed lips as fervently as if they had never been married!

After this fond embrace, Herbert continued the reading of the letter.

"Oh!" exclaimed he, when he had perused another portion of the epistle; "your brother wants to know whether he can either become our tenant or purchase that piece of land that lies beyond the Jumbie Rock. The old king has given him a capital to start with, and he wants to turn coffee-planter."

"I am glad he has such intentions. Then he will settle down, and be near us."

"He must not be permitted to purchase it. We shall present it to him, since we have enough without it. What say you, Kate? It is yours, not mine, to give."

"Ah!" returned the young wife, in a tone of playful reproach, "do not distress me with those sad souvenirs. You know that I gave it to you when I might have believed myself its mistress; and—"

"Stay, dearest! Do not you distress me by such an appeal! You were its rightful owner, and should have been. Even had we not become joint proprietors, I could never have thought of dispossessing you. Say, then, that the land shall be Cubina's!"

A repetition of that sweet embrace pronounced the consent of both to the proposal of Cubina.

Herbert resumed the reading of the letter.

"Good heavens!" cried he, on finishing its perusal, "what a singular story! The captain of the slaver who brought Yola's brother over to Jamaica has been back again to the coast. What a terrible retaliation!"

"What, dear Herbert?"

"Only that they have eaten him!"

"Oh, merciful Father!"

"Sad and terrible though it be, it is true; else Cubina would not have written it. Hear what he says:—"

"'Jowler'—that was the name of the slaver's captain—presented himself before old Foolah-foota, in search of a fresh cargo of slaves. The king, already apprised of the skipper's treason to Cingues, instantly ordered him to be seized; and, without trial or other formality, caused him to be chopped to pieces upon the spot. He was afterward cooked and eaten, at the grand national feast which was held on the celebration of my nuptials with the Princess Yola. Crambo! it was a painful scene; and one might have felt sympathy for the unfortunate wretch, had he been anything else than a dealer in human flesh; but under that reflection, I stood by without feeling any great desire to interfere in his behalf. In fact, my Fellatah father-in-law was so furious, I could not have saved the wretch from a fate which, after all, was perhaps not more than he deserved, and to which, no doubt, the poor victims he had carried across the Atlantic would have been only too glad to have seen him consigned.'"

"It is well," said Kate, with a thoughtful air, "that Cubina has determined upon leaving a land where, I fear, such scenes are too common. I shall be so happy to see them both once more in our dear, beautiful island! And you, Herbert, I am sure, will rejoice at their return."

"Most certainly I shall. Ah, Kate! did it ever occur to you how much we are indebted to them?"

"Often, Herbert—often. And were it not that I am a firm believer in destiny, I should fancy that but for them—"

"Nonsense, Kate!" playfully interrupted the young husband. "None of your creole superstitions. There is no such thing as destiny. It was not that which ruled my heart to believe you the fairest thing in creation—but because you are so. Don't be ungenerous to Cubina and Yola. Give them all the credit that is due to them. Say frankly, love, that but for them you might have become Mrs. Smythje, and I—"

"Oh, Herbert! speak not of the past. Let that be buried in oblivion, since our present is everything we can desire!"

"Agreed! But for all that, dearest, do not let us forget the gratitude we owe to Cubina

and his dark-skinned bride. And to prove it to them, I propose something more than giving them the piece of land. Let us build them a house upon it; so that upon their arrival they may have a roof to shelter them."

"Oh, that would be a pleasant surprise for them!"

"Then we shall bring it about. What a lovely morning! Don't you think so, Kate?"

As Herbert put this interrogatory, he glanced out through the open jalousies.

There was nothing particularly fine about the morning—at least for Jamaica, but Kate saw with Herbert's eyes; and just then, to the eyes of both, everything appeared *couleur de-rose*.

"Indeed, a beautiful morning!" answered the young wife, glancing inquiringly toward her husband.

"What say you, then, to a little excursion, a *pirod*?"

"I should be delighted, Herbert. Where do you think of going?"

"Guess now!"

"No—you must tell me."

"You forget. According to creole custom, our honeymoon is to last for twelve months. Until that be terminated, you are to be master, sweet Kate. Where would you most like to go?"

"I have no choice, Herbert. Anywhere. In your company it is all the same to me. You must decide."

"Well, then, dearest, since you leave it to me, I declare for the Jumbie Rock. Its summit overlooks the piece of land we intend presenting to our brother Cubina. While we are there we can select the site for his house. Is it agreeable to you?"

"Dearest Herbert," replied the young wife, entwining her arms around that of her husband's, and gazing fondly into his eyes—"the very place I was thinking of."

THE END.

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